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POLITICAL PARTIES IN OREGON

THE NEWSPAPER TRIUMVIRATE
WHICH MOULDED OREGON POLITICS

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The Rise and Early History of Political Parties in Oregon

1843-1868

By

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TO MY PARENTS

PREFACE

IT is rather a striking fact that with all that has been written concerning the various phases of the history of the Oregon Country, so little attention has been given to its political development, in the more restricted sense. The very beginnings of American government in the far west were made in Oregon, yet, so far as an adequate and detailed relation is concerned, that thrilling and critical period of a quarter of a century following the setting up of the Provisional Government in 1843, has been heretofore neglected.

Early in this period Oregon was organized as a territory of the United States, the debate on the territorial bill giving rise to the enunciation by Calhoun of the partnership doctrine of the Southern Democracy, which led eventually to secession. Territorial organization was quickly followed by party organization on the basis of national political alignment. National issues were fought out in the far distant territory with the same passion and desperation that marked the struggle at the Nation's capital. Political capacity and leadership of a high order were developed in the field of frontier politics. Stirring indeed were the ante-bellum days in far away Oregon! Every great question or movement of national import, be it political, social or economic, was quickly reflected in the columns of the Oregon newspapers. And dominating all was that of slavery, which institution threatened for a time to fasten itself upon the virgin soil of the Pacific Northwest. It was the period of the great national crisis in which the secession element made a strong bid for Oregon, but was frustrated by the union of loyal Democrats and Republicans.

It is the story of this period of storm and stress and crisis, vital in its import, spectacular in its expression, that the writer, himself an Oregonian, has attempted to narrate. He has aspired, first to give the facts, and second by a vivid portrayal to reproduce something of the spirit of those politically strenuous years.

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Preface

It is the thought of the writer that the history of Oregon in the quarter century in question is important not only from a local but also from a national point of view. Nowhere can be better traced the close relations between the central, national government and its isolated frontier, separated though they were by vast expanse of ocean, by dreary wastes of mountain and desert and by months of time. In the pages which follow it is hoped that this close, vital relationship between the local and the national institutions has been effectively and convincingly presented.

In this connection it is a pleasure to express the writer's deep sense of obligation to one man whose enthusiastic cooperation throughout the preparation of this work has been invaluable. In his interest in securing and providing various source materials, in drawing upon his own wide range of first hand information and in ready counsel and sympathetic criticism, he is in a large sense the "silent partner" of this, as well as of almost every other venture in the realm of Northwest history. It is hardly necessary to add that the man referred to is Mr. Geo. H. Himes, Assistant Secretary and Curator of the Oregon Historical Society. Hardly less an acknowledgment is due Dr. E. I. McCormac, Assistant Professor of History in the University of California, for his thorough, painstaking criticism, from the national viewpoint especially, of the various chapters as they were written. If accuracy and impartiality of statement have been secured, to him is due much credit, both directly through his helpful criticism, and indirectly through his high ideals in this respect which he instills in those with whom he comes in contact. The writer furthermore wishes to express appreciation to Professor J. R. Robertson, formerly Professor of History in Pacific University, but now holding that position in Berea College, Kentucky, who made helpful suggestions relative to the scope of this work.

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NOTE ON SOURCES

Necessarily, in treating a subject of this nature, great dependence must be placed in the newspapers of the period, as sources of material. First, in the records of what actually took place—reports of conventions and meetings of various kinds, resolutions and platforms adopted, legislative proceedings, etc. Second, fully as important, but to be used more guardedly, the expression of public opinion upon those passing events, this public opinion being registered in editorial comment, contributed articles and in oral public expression. Obviously, to measure public sentiment at all accurately by newspaper utterances, it is necessary to have before one, papers representing the various political points of view. In this the writer has been fortunate. From the time political activity in Oregon really begins, newspapers of opposite political tendencies have been available.

Of these, the Oregonian, the Oregon Statesman and the Oregon Argus have been relied upon most extensively. They were the most representative of the Oregon press and extended over the greater part of the period under consideration. On the period of ante-political organization, access was had to the Spectator, and, in a limited degree, to the Western Star, Milwaukie, changed to the Oregon Weekly Times in June, 1851. Next in importance to the first three journals mentioned should be named the Oregon Weekly Union, the exponent of anti-Union sentiment in the Civil War era. Other papers directly consulted, were the Oregon Weekly Times, the Oregon Sentinel and the Oregon Daily Herald. Indirectly, yet other papers have been frequently used, by means principally of editorial utterances reproduced in the above mentioned journals.

Closely related to, but differing slightly from the Oregon newspaper sources, is the correspondence of Judge M. P. Deady to the San Francisco Bulletin, to be found in what is known as the "Deady scrapbook," in possession of the Oregon Historical Society. In Judge Deady the capacities of keen observation and trenchant expression were combined with the faculty of being able to write with a minimum of personal, political bias. For this reason, these letters, covering the crucial period of the sixties and written for the perusal of outside readers, are almost invaluable. The same may be said of his personal correspondence.

Supplementing the newspaper material in a very important manner, is the private correspondence, in the Oregon Historical Society collections, of many men who were the most active participants in the politics of the time, notably Joseph Lane, Asahel Bush, J. W. Nesmith, Judge Deady and Jesse Applegate. In this connection may be mentioned also the personal interviews with such men as Judge Geo. H. Williams, former Adjutant General C. A. Reed, W. R. Bishop and Geo. H. Himes, who, either from actual participation or observation, or both, threw much light on the events of a half century ago.

Other primary material used was the collection of Oregon pioneer documents to be found in the Bancroft Library of the University of California. These are largely memoirs and relate principally to settlement and to the period of the Provisional Government. As representative of these may be mentioned, Jesse Applegate's "Views of Oregon History," Deady's "Oregon History," Peter H. Burnett's "Recollections of the Past" and Elwood Evans' "History of Oregon."

Likewise covering the period of the Provisional Government are Grover's "Oregon Archives" and a volume, "Unpublished Documents, Oregon Archives," Ms., in the Bancroft Library.

Of secondary material used, the "Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society," 1900-1909, contains much that has been suggestive and helpful. Such contributions, for example, as "The Genesis of Political Authority in Oregon" and "Social Evolution in Oregon," by J. R. Robertson, and "The Slavery Question in Oregon," by T. W. Davenport, are typical of various articles dealing with both social and political beginnings in Oregon, together with various phases of political development.

NOTE ON SOURCES

The printed Proceedings of the annual meetings of the Oregon Pioneer Association have been used to some extent—for material on the period of settlement principally.

From the nature of the subject, the assistance to be obtained from secondary books, has necessarily been slight. Such books as have been used for reference have been sufficiently cited in the footnotes.

PART I

INTRODUCTORY

THE PERIOD OF THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER I

POLITICAL BASIS AS FOUND IN SETTLEMENT

No story of the political development of a people would be complete without some notice of the basis of that development as found in the conditions of the settlement of its territory. The sources and manner of settlement, the motives prompting it, the geographical relations, the effect of frontier environment—all contribute toward expressing the character of the state builders. From Jamestown and Plymouth onward, the study of such conditions has contributed largely to an understanding of American institutions.

Particularly is such study important where distinctive elements enter into the situation as is the case in the political beginnings of Oregon.[1] Two, if not three, such elements are to be noted. First, that of geographic isolation.[2] The history of the westward extension of the American frontier had been that of a steady and gradual movement from the known to the relatively unknown. No advance was so decided that the new frontier was not linked to an appreciable degree with the old. A forward advance from Missouri to the Pacific wrote a new chapter in the story of American expansion. The second distinctive element, related to that of distance, is found in the fact that it was a land emigration. The early colonization of America, involving great distances, was effected by the sea voyage. An overland journey, embracing months en route over desert wastes and obstructive mountain ranges and involving dangers from hostile peoples, produces problems peculiar to itself. These two elements are geographical. The third is political. The vast country toward which the settlers were making their way was not strictly American territory. It was at the same time either American or British and was neither. By the treaty of joint occupation concluded between Great Britain and the

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[1] In the discussion of the political development of Oregon, it is that territory comprising the present state which is under special consideration. However, in the study of the early period, the area of the state of Washington is included up to 1853, when the latter was set off from Oregon as a separate Territory.

[2] J. R. Robertson, "Genesis of Political Authority in Oregon," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, March, 1900, p. 8.

United States in 1818 and renewed in 1827, the two nations were to have equal rights of settlement in the Oregon country pending an agreement as to the ownership of the contested territory. The settlers were thus entering a partnership relation solely on the chance that they would be able to oust the other partner and secure control. Any other sequel would render their venture a failure.

What were some of the more general conditions affecting settlement? The motives promoting it were varied, some old as the story of the race, some particular and local, but all to be taken into consideration as factors in that composite product —the future citizenship of Oregon. The one most widely applicable is doubtless to be found in the "force of the ever impelling westward movement—an inborn passion leading to new westward regions."[1] But this does not signify the pioneer to have been a mere first grade tramp—an irresponsible "wanderer in the earth." If he responded to this potent Wanderlust, he had a reason for his action. This big, all-inclusive spirit and movement which has given the distinctive character to our American civilization is certainly not based on mere whim and caprice.

Whatever else he may have been, the typical emigrant was preeminently a home seeker and a home builder;[2] not primarily a gold seeker, an explorer, a land speculator, nor an agent of political or religious dogma. This meant the possession of moral tone and stability. It gave the new community from the first that element of permanency as a sure basis for future political action.

Various factors, more or less significant, entered into this general motif of home building. The greatest was doubtless economic. Many of the pioneers had lived in the interior, west of the Mississippi river, with few or no transportation facilities for taking their products to a market. They had thus borne the brunt of the hard times of the late thirties and were prepared to give ready ear to the story of a new and fertile country where open waterway transportation to the sea was ample.[1] Coupled with this was the typical western attitude of mind that in a more or less vague way placed the responsibility of their bad financial situation upon the East, resulting in their nursing a sense of injury and in their desire to place themselves beyond baleful tutelage. Land values were rising throughout the Middle West, necessitating smaller holdings. To a man of a large family for which he desired an adequate field of activity, the situation was becoming less and less desirable. The pioneer method of agriculture is extensive. There is land in plenty and to spare and it is natural to seek the greatest returns with the minimum of effort. The extent of American areas had ever fostered this attitude and it has been a decisive factor in continually pushing westward the line of frontier. The farmer's land was rising in price. Taxes were increasing. Greater effort was required for making a comfortable living. Debt followed financial stringency, with its relentless mortgage. Why not go to Oregon and begin again where free land was in prospect? The man with several sons rapidly approaching manhood wished them to have the opportunity which had been his when as a young man he had taken up land on the then frontier. This opportunity was virtually promised in the far Northwest by the enlistment of such men as Benton and Linn in the effort to give the Oregon question an American solution.[2] The Linn Bill with its provision granting six hundred and forty acres of land to every white male inhabitant who should cultivate the same for four years, had finally passed the Senate, February 3, 1843. It was an earnest of the future to those whose faces were set westward. The desire to "give the boys a chance," was not the least of those influences promoting settlement.[3]

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[1] G. H. Atkinson, Address before the Oregon Pioneer Association, 1880. J. Q. Thornton, "Oregon and California," pp. 25-27.

[2] P. S. Knight, Address before Oregon Pioneer Association, 1898. Proceedings, p. 37.

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[1] Jesse Applegate, "Views of Oregon History," Ms. p. 31.

[2] Jesse Applegate, "Views of Oregon History," Ms. p. 32.

[3] "Linn's bill in Congress was the first start that set me to thinking of coming here. . . . Another inducement was to settle my family . . . a family of boys and they were getting to be men and I was not able to settle them in Missouri. Land began to get up and it was hard to get, and I thought by moving to a new country my boys could shift for themselves." Wm. Shaw, "Mississippi and Columbia River Valley Pioneer Lite Compared," Ms. pp. 6, 7.

A factor at once economic, political and social is found in that institution whose influence had already become dominant in American politics—slavery. The small land holder in the Southwest felt its blighting effect. Indeed, its influence was not limited by Mason's and Dixon's Line. As a three-fold factor it touched the life of the Southerners, while it was in its political phase first, and economic second, that it gave its impress northward. To the man who hesitated to raise his family in the vitiating atmosphere of slavery; to him who chafed under the growing abasement of free labor and the iniquities incident to a social system based on servitude; to him who felt the great impending political and sectional struggle, the Oregon trail appeared as the road leading out of bondage. A concrete example is found in the expression of one of the foremost of Oregon's early settlers, Lindsey Applegate, to the effect that he came to Oregon because a pro-slavery mob, sustained by an intolerant public sentiment, drove him and his friends from the voting place in his native state in 1842.[1]

To these general motives may be added others which apply in a more restricted manner. No inconsiderable number were drawn by religious zeal, quickened by the prospect of a new field of effort in the evangelization of the native races of the great Northwest. The impress of this class was marked in the new community for years. Some sought a new and wider sphere of political activity in the hope of personal advancement, where youth would not be a reproach or where a mantle of charity would be thrown over the past; where all might start anew on a common basis. There was a class of men who had preceded the bona fide settlers to the West—to the mountain districts especially. They came in quest of those fur bearing animals, the struggle to obtain which has had so great a significance in the winning of the West. Fur traders primarily, these men early became colonizers. On the other hand, following the earlier emigrant trains came the gold seekers and those drawn by opportunities offered in business and speculation. Finally, underlying and supporting these various motives generally, was that inborn, inbred instinct for adventure, very strong in the young and far from impotent in the older. The very element of uncertainty appealed strongly to those whose fathers, beginning at the Atlantic seaboard, had pushed out into the unknown West, and step by step, had conquered their wilderness. Closely akin to this was the demand for personal freedom of action. Generations of pioneering breeds a strong individualism which chafed under conditions imposing restraint. This attitude of mind is clearly, though homely expressed in the words of the typical Westerner who said he came "because the thing wasn't fenced in and nobody dared to keep him off."[1]

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[1] Col. Geo. B. Currey, Address before the Oregon Pioneer Association, 1887. Proceedings, p. 35.

A general knowledge at least of the source of Oregon colonization is necessary for the understanding of the political development of the future commonwealth. It is conceded that the greatest contribution was made by the Middle West. The popular idea, however, seems to attribute too much of this to the far West and South. Geo. H. Himes, Curator of the Oregon Historical Society collections, has secured memorandum cards giving detailed information concerning over seven thousand of the early settlers, as to birth, ancestry, home, place of departure, etc. A study of this data shows that many of the emigrants who are credited to Missouri and other far western territory, were rather transient residents. Their homes were in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Tennessee. They had started on the distant journey westward, in some cases with Oregon as the goal from the start. Misfortunes or financial considerations had compelled a stop by the way, sometimes for two or three years, in which fortunes were recruited and preparations renewed for the continued journey. In other cases the final destination was not in view from the first. Bona fide settlement had been made in Iowa or Missouri from states east of the Mississippi, but in a very short time, succumbing to the Oregon fever, the new settlers were found in the emigrant trains which rendezvoused in Western Missouri. In many instances the way to the Columbia was made from some eastern state in three advances, as from New York to Illinois to Iowa; West Virginia to Ohio to Missouri; or North Carolina to Tennessee to Missouri—and thence to Oregon. The significance of these facts will be noted presently. The distinctly agricultural population of the new community was largely middle western—principally from that part of the Mississippi Valley region limited by the parallels of latitude thirty-five to forty-two. The business or mercantile element in the new population came largely from New York and New England, and by sea,[1] as did also a part of the missionary element.[2]

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[1] Col. Geo. B. Currey, Address before the Oregon Pioneer Association, 1887. Proceedings, p. 35.

From the facts so far set forth, what can be deduced as to the general or composite character of the population which founded the distant state? First, those conditions spoken of as distinctive in its settlement are worthy of notice. The facts of geographic isolation and a land emigration may be taken together. The well-nigh appalling distance, taken into consideration with the difficulties and privations to be met over desert and mountains and the dangers from hostile Indians, "formed a selecting test of the kind of people who alone could come to Oregon."[3] The timorous and the weak were in a large measure eliminated. They gave way to the aggressive, the resolute, the venturesome, the resourceful, the physically fit; to the younger and middle aged. The distance and the length of time on the road, necessitated careful preparation in securing adequate equipment. A good outfit meant an investment of several hundred dollars. This fact eliminated for the most part the indigent and extremely poor. The rich excluded themselves and as a result we have a population between the two extremes, but below rather than above the middle line—moderately well-to-do only.

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[1] M. P. Deady, "Oregon History," pp. 39, 40.

[2] Mr. Himes finds that of Oregon's pioneer population, 6 per cent. came from New England, 50 per cent. from the Middle West, 33 per cent. from South of Mason's and Dixon's Line and 11 per cent. from 22 foreign countries, the great majority of the latter from the British Isles, Canada and Germany.

[3] Thos. Condon, "Selection in Pioneer Settlement" in Oregon Historical Society Quarterly for March, 1900, pp. 60-65.

The distance from the Atlantic Coast naturally excluded the undesirable, floating element of foreign immigration which has readier access to the East. Of the pioneer foreign born population of Oregon, which for the most part was of a desirable nature, less than twenty-five per cent. came directly. This means that it had already become largely, if not wholly, Americanized.

The element of uncertainty as to the ultimate ownership of Oregon served to deter the conservative and incite the politically resolute. With personal interest was merged in different degrees an inherited spirit of active and aggressive patriotism which was eager to enter upon the conquest of new empire, particularly when the loser would be Great Britain. The element of risk and venture, allied with the national instinct, fostered by the treaty of joint occupation of the Oregon Territory between Great Britain and the United States, acted as an incentive to the aggressive western American.

In the various motives influencing settlement, heretofore recounted, may be found in large terms, the character of the colonizers. The home builder, with a high, serious purpose in view, acted with a sense of sober responsibility. He was not erratic and vacillating. The desire to escape the moral and political evils of slavery likewise added to the moral tone of the new community. The religious element of the population, with the missionaries as a nucleus, exerted a striking formative influence in the development of the country. With the discovery of gold and the advent of a different type of men, the result was temporarily to lower this high standard. Above all, independence and freedom of individual action, characterized the Oregon pioneer. He was typically a western man and the heir of several generations of pioneers through which individualism had been steadily developed. This fact stands out prominently from the very first, when the emigrant train organized and chose officers for the journey. Lieutenant Wm. Peel of the British Navy, who was in Oregon in 1845, impressed by this characteristic of the American colonists, remarked to Jesse Applegate that they would make the best soldiers in the world. The latter, one of the leaders of the emigrant train of 1843, replied that "they were probably brave enough, but would never submit to discipline as soldiers. If the President himself had started across the Plains to command a company, the first time he would choose a bad camp or in any way offend them, they would turn him out and elect someone among themselves who would suit them better."[1] The Westernism of the settlers was especially manifest in the political direction. The West had but recently come into its own as a power in national politics in the elevation of its popular hero Jackson to the executive chair. The first flush from the realization of that power had not passed. Every settler was a politician, and not in the mere sense of the word as used today when preceded by the word "practical." One fact which continually impresses one in studying this early period is the ease, fluency and precision with which the average man could discuss the political issues of the time in their various phases. They were the embodiment of Aristotle's dictum that man is a political animal.

The statement has been given that settlement was made not as largely from the extreme western frontier as has generally been presumed. This has political significance in the fact that the extreme individualistic tendencies of the nomadic, less responsible frontiersman, whose political theory if formulated, would have been to the effect that that government is best which governs least, was balanced by those who had become accustomed to stable political institutions and who had learned to value the same as the requisite of an endurable state of society.

In a few words then, the Oregon settlers as a class, were plain, respectable, common people, in moderate circumstances, many of whom were fairly well educated but few of whom could be called cultivated.[2] They were independent, resolute, aggressive, national, with a natural gift for politics. They were scrupulously honest, fairly progressive, not usually given to overwork.[1] They were probably not more patriotic, less selfish nor more heroic than the average American, but they were characterized by those qualities which the exigencies of the situation called forth and which adapted them for the work of state-making under the peculiar conditions which were to confront them in the Pacific Northwest.

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[1] Applegate, "Views of Oregon History," Ms. pp. 14, 15.

[2] Deady, "Oregon History," Ms. p. 71.

One of the first results of the appearance of the vanguard of American independent colonization in Oregon was a sudden reversal of its policy of occupation on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company. To the English Company Oregon was nothing but a fur bearing district. Settlement was discouraged. Discharged employees were transported out of the country. Oregon must be preserved in its primeval state. But with the Americans in the field it was different. The Puget Sound Agricultural Company was organized in 1837, as rather an adjunct to the old organization, its purpose being to colonize the territory with British subjects. But English colonization of Oregon was difficult. Not until 1841 did an emigration arrive from the British Red river settlement of the North and the failure of its attempt at settlement north of the Columbia discouraged future attempts in this direction. They had waited too long.[2] The Americans had found the way, had conquered its obstacles and were arriving in numbers as convincing as disheartening to the British officials.

The two systems of industry were now in open competition, the fur trade versus agriculture, typifying the struggle for possession between the two nationalities which they represented. There could be little question as to the result. It has always been the same. With the arrival of the farmer the fur trader soon disappears. As opposed to the industry which had marked English dominance, agriculture meant settlement, development and Americanization. And as surely as it displaced the former, so surely did American interests supplant those of the British. There was a question as to which nation had priority rights by discovery and exploration. But there could be no longer any question as to which had fulfilled the second condition for valid title, in occupation and settlement. The American settlers had won, for themselves and the United States. In the first place they were winners of empire; in the second, builders of state. "This great movement of immigrants to Oregon from 1843 to 1846, inclusive, may not even now be thoroughly understood nor explained, but it is fully appreciated. With all its dangers and hardships, with all its mystery and simplicity and its commonplaces, it stands today one of the most daring colonizing movements for, and the most remarkable, interesting and romantic story of the settlement and upbuilding of any part of the continents of the two Americas."[1]

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[1] Judge Wm. Strong, "Oregon History," Ms. 19, 20.

[2] H. O. Lang, "History of the Willamette Valley," p. 234.

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[1] F. V. Holman, "Dr. John McLoughlin," p. 89.

CHAPTER II

AMERICAN SELF-GOVERNMENT

As the arrival of the Americans in Oregon placed two opposing systems of industry, representing opposing nationalities, in open and active competition, in the same manner were two conflicting ideals of government brought into contact. The purposes and ends of the British occupation in the Northwest called for centralized and arbitrary government. Primarily a commercial organization, the vast interests of the Hudson's Bay Company necessitated a strong political organization, which was necessarily autocratic in form and spirit. And as far as the English Government was concerned, the Company's law was the British Constitution in the Oregon Territory. The Hudson's Bay governor and his council had authority not only to punish their own offenders but also to try for any crimes in any of "the said Company's plantations, forts, factories or places of trade within the Hudson's Bay territory."[1] For the furtherance and protection of the interests of the fur trade, the vast territory must be carefully policed, and thorough police organization is another expression for arbitrary authority. All of the employees of the Company were subject to the most rigid discipline, not less complete than in the British military organization itself. If exceptions were made to the rule forbidding settlement as in the case of the Canadian settlers on French Prairie, the relations established were in a large measure feudal. "Authority" was the keynote of British rule in the Northwest, and authority always exerted from above.

How antithetical was all this to the spirit and training of the American settler—the heir of generations of local self-government! Indeed, eliminating from the history of his fathers the story of their struggle for and their activities in, the exercise of self-government, there would be little worth the telling. The story of the movement of westward expansion is the story of the establishing and growth of free local institutions. As the Hudson's Bay officials had been trained in an atmosphere of absolutism at one extreme, the Western American was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of independence and self sufficiency on the other. The two radically differing political ideals had largely moulded the temperament and personality of those holding them, rendering misunderstanding and friction almost inevitable. "The direction of the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company was confined to a comparatively few men, and these were strongly influenced by aristocratic tendencies. Being themselves subject to rules adopted by the directors of the Company in London, they subjected all their servants down to the Canadian and Indian messenger to 'authority.' This tendency led the officers of the Company into many mistakes in their dealings with the Western men."[1] That the Hudson's Bay officials clearly recognized from the first this irreconcilable difference in political attitude, and its import, is clear. When in 1844 an American attempted to establish a claim on the north side of the Columbia within the shadow of the Company's factory at Fort Vancouver, Governor John McLoughlin and Chief Factor James Douglas made strenuous protestation, candidly admitting that they feared that such proximity of American ideas and ways would tend to render their servants insubordinate.[2]

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[1] H. H. Bancroft, "History of Oregon," Vol. 1, p. 48.

It has been shown that through the Hudson's Bay Company the British Government followed its subjects with law into the debatable Oregon country. As far back as 1821 the English Parliament had passed a bill by the terms of which the laws of Canada were extended over English subjects operating in the territory to the South, those laws to be exercised or enforced at the hands of the Company officials as justices of the peace.[3] On the other hand what was the legal status of the immigrating Americans to be? It was unthinkable that they should subject themselves to the existing government, for reasons already given and because such a course would defeat the very purpose for which they had come. Yet their own Government refrained from throwing over them the protection of its laws and political institutions. This remissness was a cause of embarrassment, if not shame, with the settlers, before their English competitors. While in the westward expansion of our territory the people have always preceded the National Government, the remoteness of the territory and the fact of joint ownership made the situation in Oregon peculiarly trying, and called for prompt action. When on the other hand unusual dilatoriness and hesitancy was shown by the Government at Washington, it was a cause of disappointment and irritation.[1] That this apparent neglect on the part of the United States Government was occasioned by a difficult international situation, the Oregon colonists were in a poor position to realize. In 1842 Dr. Elijah White was appointed by the President as a sub-Indian agent in Oregon. This has been designated as the initial step of the Executive Department in reclaiming Oregon and treating it as a territory of the United States.[2] That it was so considered by the American settlers is evidenced by the minutes of a meeting held June 23, 1843, at Champoeg, in which the following resolution is found: "Resolved, That we, the citizens of Willamette Valley, are exceedingly happy in the consideration that the Government of the United States have manifested their intentions through their agent, Dr. E. White, of extending their jurisdiction and protection over this country."[3] But for years this was to be but a token of future action and was not followed up in a way to assist the colonists in solving a puzzling problem. "The American immigrants were often doomed to feel that they occupied the extraordinary and in every way anomalous position of a people who, without having either renounced their country, or being renounced by it, were, nevertheless, without one."[4]

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[1] John Minto, "Early Days in Oregon," Ms., pp. 26, 27.

[2] Ibid, pp. 28, 29.

[3] Text of Act found in J. H. Brown's "Political History of Oregon," pp. 24-29.

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[1] Robertson, "Genesis of Political Authority in Oregon," p. 21.

[2] Elwood Evans, "History of Oregon," Ms. p. 252. cf. Dr. Elijah White's "Early Government in Oregon," Ms., pp. 14, 26-29.

[3] Brown's "Political History of Oregon," p. 97.

[4] J. Quinn Thornton, "Oregon and California," pp. 28-30.

A steadily growing population made established government necessary. The situation of the colonists is clearly expressed officially in the message of the Executive Committee to the Legislative Committee, dated June 18, 1844:[1] "The United States held out inducements to their citizens and indirectly encouraged the settlement of this country by them. Consequently we are now improving the country by their consent but without their protection. And it is self-evident that every community have a right to make laws for their mutual benefit and protection where no law exists . . . Although this colony is small and its resources feeble, yet the life, rights and liberties of an individual here are of equal value to him as to one in the city of Washington or London." The tenure of the land upon which the settlers were building homes was uncertain and anxiety to secure permanent titles to claims taken up and improved was a strong factor in the demand for a government. The need of protection from the Indians, from possible aggression on the part of the British, from the lawlessness of the floating element which is always found to some degree in a new community, the need of regulations to govern the growing business relations, the inherited love of democratic institutions, the very sense of nationality itself, despite the lack of its encouragement—all combined to make established forms of government imperative.[2] If the United States declined to inaugurate these, fearing international complications which might result, there was but one course to be pursued. As often in the past in the advance of the frontier, the frontiersmen instituted their own government, so now must those directly concerned rely upon themselves. But American pioneering had presented no problem with the peculiar complications and difficulties of this. The American genius for self-government had here a work worthy of all its achievements in the past.

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[1] Unpublished Documents, Oregon Archives, p. 17.

[2] "We found ourselves placed in a new and very embarrassing position. The right of sovereignty over the country was in dispute between the United States and Great Britain and neither country could establish any government over us. Our community was composed of American citizens and British subjects, occupying the same country as neighbors with all their respective national prejudices and attachments, and so distant from the mother countries as to be to a great extent beyond the reach of home influences. We had, therefore, a difficult population to govern; but this fact only rendered government the more necessary."—Burnett, Peter H., "Recollections of the Past," Ms., Vol. 1, p. 144.

The story of the organization of the Provisional Government has been often told and will not be dwelt upon here. Those phases only of the movement and its period will be touched upon which affect the general question of the purely political capacities and tendencies of the founders of the first American government on the Pacific Coast. The movement was launched in February, 1841, but the allied opposition of the British and Catholic interests proved too strong to warrant immediate action. There was no unanimity of opinion and attitude among the Americans. There was a not unnatural jealousy existing between the missionary element of the population, the first in the field and in a measure subsidized by the Missionary Board of the M. E. Church, and the independent American settlers, placed absolutely upon their own resources. As the latter rapidly became more numerous and their influence increased accordingly, the leaders of the former relaxed to some degree in their zeal in the cause which they themselves had first promoted.[1] To some it was questionable whether it would not be better, in order to enlist the co-operation of the British settlers as represented principally by the French Canadians, to organize a government independent of any reference either to Great Britain or the United States. Even if this had generally been acceded to, as a matter of policy the continued attitude of aloofness on the part of the latter would have weakened such a position. The conflicting ideals of the two peoples, above referred to, is clearly shown in the "Address of the Canadian Citizens of Oregon" in protest against the proposed government.[2] In a long list of objections, they say: "We do not wish a provisional mode of government, too self-interested and full of degrees, useless to our power and overloading the colony instead of improving it. . . We wish either the mode of senate or council to judge the difficulties, punish the crimes (except capital penalties), and make the regulations suitable for the people . . . The more laws there are, the more opportunities for roguery for those who make a practice of it." Here we have a direct expression of the lack of confidence in the people to govern themselves wisely and of a preference for the autocratic, arbitrary rule to which they were accustomed under the Hudson's Bay regime.

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[1] S. A. Clarke, "Pioneer Days of Oregon History," Vol. 2, pp. 660, 661. H. S. Lyman, "History of Oregon," Vol. 3, pp. 290, 291.

[2] Oregon Archives, pp. 12, 13. Compiled by L. F. Grover.

The all-absorbing question was finally brought to a direct issue at the historic Champoeg meeting of May 2, 1843, when by a vote of 52 to 50, organization was decided upon, which resulted in the withdrawal of the Canadians from the meeting. The Oregon Provisional Government then, was distinctly American in inception, in spirit and in form. This is openly avowed in the first section of the Organic Law: "We, the people of Oregon Territory, for purposes of mutual protection and to secure peace and prosperity among ourselves, agree to adopt the following laws and regulations, until such time as the United States of America extend their jurisdiction over us." The momentous decision reached, the work of organization was taken up with ability and dispatch. Officers, judicial, executive and military, were elected. A legislative committee of nine was appointed to draw up a form of government for the new commonwealth and report the same to another public meeting to be held July 5th. The committee, to which was entrusted this important work, was truly representative of the citizenship for which it acted. The members were typical pioneers, plain men, somewhat rough and unassuming in exterior, unlettered in constitutional law but with much good common sense and equal to a situation. The Mountain men, the indedependent settlers and the Missionaries were all represented among them. Dividing themselves into sub-committees on judiciary, ways and means, military affairs, land claims and division of country into districts, the work was performed with system and promptness. Their report was accepted at the above mentioned meeting, the officers elected in May were sworn in, an executive committee chosen and the new government was in operation. Under the constitution, the three departments were arranged for as follows: Executive—an elective committee of three; Legislative—an elective committee of nine, representing the various districts according to their population; Judicial—a supreme court, consisting of a supreme judge and two justices of the peace, a probate court, and in justices of the peace. Various officials necessary to effective administration were provided for.

Though the large reinforcement of 1843 was on the way, for the time, those owning allegiance to the new government were in the minority in Oregon.[1] Increasing population with growing interests demanded an enlargement of governmental machinery, with the result that amendments to the Constitution were made in 1844 and again in 1845. The people showed themselves apt in their school of political experience, corrected mistakes made in the first organization and readily adapted their government to meet changing conditions. This Provisional Government, framed under such peculiar and difficult circumstances gave the new country order, peace and security for six years. Its markedly successful administration is the crowning glory of the Oregon pioneers.[2] Beginning with a minority of the people under its jurisdiction, it soon encompassed all, including the British element itself. It provided regulations governing business and social relations, enforced its laws against criminals with despatch, provided for the settlement of lands, made internal improvements, prosecuted successfully an Indian war far from the scene of main settlement; and all with commendable economy and conservatism. No better example can be found of the political resourcefulness of the American frontier settler.[3] It did more than merely provide local stability and security. From a national standpoint it completed the transition from the British to the American regime politically, which the settlers had begun industrially. What the United States Government had not felt free to accomplish had been perfected by the colonists themselves and without foreign complication.[1] They had given the obvious solution to the Oregon Question.

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[1] H. W. Scott, "The Provisional Government," in Oregon Historical Society Quarterly for June, 1901, pp. 108, 109.

[2] The Provisional Government—the crowning glory of the Oregon pioneers,—a striking exhibit of patient submissiveness when the American settlers were in the minority—of the magnanimity and conservatism when in the majority. . . We must commend pluck, endurance, tact, their sturdy republicanism displayed in their persistent effort to secure the consent of the governed; . . . nor must we withhold our meed of praise for that scrupulous regard for the national prejudice of the British subject, who was their fellow citizen."—Elwood Evans, address before the Oregon Pioneer Association, in Proceedings for 1877.

[3] Robertson, "Social Evolution in Oregon," p. 31.

Let us see what political characteristics or tendencies of the pioneer state makers are observable as illustrated either in their form of government, its administration or in legislation enacted—what inclinations or prejudices they manifested which might be expected to influence the later political development of the state. It has been suggested that the self-constituted government was thoroughly American in form and spirit. This is readily seen in the general provisions of the Organic Law. The Bill of Rights and political guarantees generally are taken from the Constitution of the United States and provide for freedom of religious belief and worship, right of habeas corpus and trial by jury, of judicial procedure according to the course of common law, moderate fines and just punishment, the rights of property and other "inalienable rights" so dear to the American heart. This similarity to the National Constitution is still more marked in the revised constitution of 1845 which reflects the influence of the aggressive nationalism of the pioneers of 1843 and 1844. Additions are made to the Bill of Rights, indicating the strong sense of personal liberty and independence in the citizens of the embryo commonwealth. The article guaranteeing the encouragement of morality and knowledge, the maintenance of schools, the exercise of good faith and justice to the Indians, reproduces the language of the Ordinance of 1787, which document was used largely as a basis for the new frame of government.[2]

Where the feeling for personal liberty is so strong, jealousy of executive authority is manifested in like degree and this is well illustrated in that provision of the Organic Law which created an executive committee. At the Champoeg meeting of

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[1] Robertson, "Genesis of Political Authority," pp. 39, 40. Evans, "History of Oregon," Ms., p. 271.

[2] Applegate, "Views of Oregon History," Ms., p. 39.

May 2, 1843, after the action in favor of political organization was taken, the first motion carried was that there should be no governor.[1] In view of the need of some form of executive authority, this mandate of the people gave the Legislative Committee no little trouble, the expedient of a committee of three being finally adopted. Even this was not sanctioned at the convention of July 5th, without vehement protest. In fact it was the only provision which met serious opposition. Gustavus Hines, who presided, characterized the triple executive as a "hydra-headed monster in the shape of an executive committee which was but a repetition of the Roman Triumvirate —three Caesars upon a throne."[2] There were also other factors entering into the situation. The receptive candidates for governor were so numerous[3] that the selection of such an officer might have left too many sore spots when unanimity in purpose and action was so necessary to success. And then the undercurrent of suspicion existing between the Mission party and the independent settlers was such that a governor from the ranks of either would have weakened the allegiance of the other. The plethora of candidates for governor indicated a healthful state of political ambition which would give tone to future politics in Oregon. With the growth in strength of the new government, the people yielded their prejudices on this point and in 1845 substituted a governor for the impracticable committee.

These typical frontiersmen were sensitive on the subject of taxation. The second motion passed at the Champoeg meeting was that no law should be passed to levy a tax.[4] This resulted in the following report of the Legislative Committee upon Ways and Means, which was adopted July 5, 1843, as a means of financing the new government: "We, the subscribers, pledge ourselves to pay annually to the Treasurer of Oregon Territory, the sums affixed to our respective names, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of government—Provided, that in all cases, each individual subscriber may at any time withdraw his name from said subscription upon paying up all arrearages and notifying the Treasurer of the colony of such desire to withdraw."[1] Here is a significant western interpretation of the theory of the Social Contract to the effect that the individual may return at pleasure to the "state of nature" from which he came. The thorough republican ideas of the framers of the government—their protest against financial obligations and restraint, are thus clearly set forth.[2] One year's trial of the free will offering method of maintaining government was sufficient, however. The Legislative Committee of 1844 amended this provision and laid a light tax, providing that any person refusing to pay taxes should have no benefit from the laws of Oregon and should be disqualified from voting.[3] This rendered the traditional "state of nature" a condition rather than a theory and tended strongly to foster a wholesome appreciation of the blessings of established order.

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[1] Robert Newell, Annotations in copy of Grover's "Oregon Archives," in Bancroft Library, University of California.

[2] J. Q. Thornton, "History of the Provisional Government" in Proceedings of Oregon Pioneer Association for 1874, p. 64. Clarke, "Pioneer Days," Vol. 2, p. 668. Lyman, "History of Oregon," Vol. 3, p. 304.

[3] Newell, Annotations.

[4] Newell, Annotations.

Jesse Applegate, close friend of Shortess who was the chief author of the Organic Law, says there was a political purpose not comprehended by the mass of American settlers in basing the scheme of government upon the Ordinance of 1787—that purpose being to settle the slavery question west of the Rocky Mountains as the Ordinance had settled it in the Northwest States to the east of them, the anti-slavery provision of the Ordinance being copied in the new document.[4] Whether the people were conscious of it or not, they were fully in sympathy with the prohibition of slavery, each of their subsequent frames of government containing the same provision. But it was a protest not only against human servitude but against the Negro himself. The settlers in general had little sympathy with slavery but those who had been in direct contact with it in the Southwest had a greater aversion against free Negroes,[1] this attitude being crystallized in an act of the first legislative committee prohibiting their presence in the new Territory.[2] Remote as Oregon was from the arena of contest, the early position of her people upon the great issue was to play a truly remarkable part in her history.

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[1] Oregon Archives, p. 27.

[2] "The fathers of the American Oregon not only acted upon the idea that all just governments derived their authority from the consent of the governed, but they granted to each citizen the power to judge of how much he was willing to contribute to the support of such government—how much he was willing to be restrained by becoming a part of that government."—Evans, "History of Oregon," Ms., pp. 275, 276.

[3] Bancroft, Vol. 1, p. 433.

[4] Applegate, "Views of Oregon History," Ms., pp. 39, 40.

The self-governing western men were chary of a too free delegation of authority to their representatives in political affairs and resented what they considered undue assumption of the same. The first general election was held May 2, 1844, as provided for in the Organic Law. The men elected to the Legislative Committee had, with the exception of two members, arrived in Oregon since the adoption of the instrument of government.[3] Recognizing defects in the latter, they proceeded in their first session to make amendments to it generally, assuming that the submission of the latter to the people was unnecessary. Though the changes made were doubtless on the whole salutary, the manner of making them created much dissatisfaction. The legislators, who had assumed the authority of constitution makers, were bitterly denounced for remodeling the Organic Law "without warrant" first obtained from the people and without submitting their work when done to their sanction or rejection."[4] When the legislative committee of 1845 met it took the extreme position that it was not a constitutional body because the law under which it had been elected had not been submitted to the people and that it must appeal to the latter for authority to alter the fundamenal law. Accordingly, after drawing up a revised constitution, it adjourned to a future date, awaiting the vote of the people on the same at a special election for which it had arranged. The fact was thus emphasized that the new government was to be government *by the people*. It was also tacitly declared by those provisions in the Organic Law making all the official positions elective and providing for annual elections.

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[1] Applegate, "Views of Oregon History," Ms. p. 40.
[2] Bancroft, Vol. 1, pp. 437-439.
[3] Bancroft, Vol. 1, p. 471.
[4] Applegate, "Views of Oregon History," Ms., p. 41.

In a similar manner it was made known by the citizens of this self-sufficient commonwealth that they would have real representative government. When in September, 1846, the news came that Congress had passed a bill giving notice of an intention to discontinue the policy of joint occupancy of the Oregon Territory and that a bill providing for an extension of the government of the United States over the citizens of Oregon was up before that body, discussion at once arose over the propriety or necessity of sending a delegate to Washington to see that the Provisional Government land law was recognized, to work for a Pacific-Atlantic railroad and to look after various interests of the Oregon country.[1] On September 26th a "meeting of the citizens of Oregon"[2] was held at Oregon City to discuss the general welfare of the country in the light of the recent action of Congress. It was decided to hold a convention in Oregon City on the first Monday in November for the purpose of drafting petitions or memorials to be circulated for the people to sign and to derive ways and means of forwarding the same, "whether by delegate or otherwise." The Spectator of November 26th gives the proceedings of the convention at which resolutions were passed denying the necessity of memorializing Congress or of sending a delegate. A year rolled round with no action on the part of the National Government. The people memorialized Congress in behalf of their needs, but the question of delegate was apparently avoided as liable to give rise to class or sectional differences. But in October, 1847, Governor Abernethy took upon himself the responsibility of secretly appointing and dispatching J. Quinn Thornton to Washington to represent the Territory, Thornton being recognized as friendly to the Missionary party, of which the governor was a member.[1] Such arbitrary procedure was not consonant with the western ideal of representative government. On the meeting of the legislature, on December 16th, J. W. Nesmith, expressing the general belief that Thornton had secretly been sent to Washington, denounced the action of Gov. Abernethy and voiced his sentiments in resolutions in which were the words: "It is important and desirable in all republican governments that the selection of all judicial and executive officers should meet the approbation and confidence of the majority of the people over which they are to exercise authority; and be as far as possible removed from the intrigue and influence of odious and secret factions."[2] The legislature prepared its own memorial and elected its own representative in Jos. L. Meek, to carry it to Washington.[3]

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[1] Oregon Spectator, September 17, 1846.
[2] Ibid., October 1.

As loyal as were these western Americans to their nation they gave evidence of that independence of attitude which signified that there was a limit to what they considered the neglect and abandonment they were called upon to suffer, beyond which they were prepared to take their political destiny wholly in their own hands. There seemed always an undercurrent of feeling in favor of independent government, fostered by the British element of the population.[4] Indeed in the early years of the Provisional Government there was the Independent party. This sentiment seems to be reflected in an act of the legislature on December 24th, 1844, calling for a popular vote on the question of calling a convention for the purpose of framing a constitution.[1] The convention project was defeated by a vote of 283 to 190.[2] This spirit of independence is illustrated in the reported stump speech of a candidate for a seat in the legislature in 1846 in which he said that they as a separate people had a right, in common with all detached communities to govern themselves; that he did not consider himself "a citizen of the United States or a subject of Great Britain" and could therefore take the oath to support the Organic Law of Oregon, without the qualifications.[3]

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[1] Bancroft, Vol. 1, pp. 619-621.

[2] Oregon Archives, pp. 225, 226, 228, 229, 231-234. Spectator, December 25, 1847.

[3] The situation presented by the Whitman massacre of November 29, 30, 1847, was the special subject of the mission of Meek.

[4] "A few persons, respectable for their character and influence in Oregon, discussed about this time (1844) the question of the expediency and necessity of an independent instead of a provisional government. It was said that the geographical position of the country . . . rendered it not only expedient but necessary. The real cause, however, for this movement was the discontent and even the resentment felt in consequence of their seeming to have been left without protection and in a state indicating abandonment by their country."—Thornton, "Oregon and California," pp. 34, 35.

As anxious as the people were to have the protection of the United States thrown over them in the form of a territorial organization, they had become so imbued with the idea of entire self-government that they took exception to the idea of being under the authority of appointive officers sent on from the East. It was understood by the colonists in 1847 that President Polk had his list of officials for Oregon already made out, in preparation for the passage of the territorial bill by Congress. There is therefore something decidedly impressive in the serene and unconscious audacity of these squatter sovereigns in calling a convention of delegates at the Falls of the Yamhill river "for the purpose of recommending to the Executive of the United States suitable persons to fill the various offices that will be created upon the passage of a bill establishing a territorial government in Oregon.[4] This attitude is thoroughly characteristic of the early people of Oregon and is demonstrated continually in the later history of the territorial organization.

Aggressive and national though the American settlers were, the administration of affairs in Oregon under their government demonstrates the qualities of liberality, moderation and conservatism often under circumstances when a manifestation of opposite tendencies might be expected. When increasing numbers had made their influence dominant their attitude toward the Hudson's Bay people and the British population is worthy of notice. Friendly overtures were made to the latter to induce them to co-operate in the new government. To make such co-operation possible and thorough the legislative session of June, 1845, modified the oath of office to read as follows: "I do solemnly swear that I will support the Organic Laws of the Provisional Government of Oregon, so far as said Organic Laws are consistent with my duties as a citizen of the United States or as a subject of Great Britain."[1] No attempt was made to control national allegiance by restrictions and restraints and members of the British party were chosen for positions of trust. This spirit of moderation is manifested in a passage from the message of the Executive Committee to the legislature of December 17, 1844: "As descendants of the United States and Great Britain we should honor and respect the countries which gave us birth; and as citizens of Oregon, we should, by a uniform course of procedure and a strict observance of the rules of justice, equity and republican principles, without party distinction, use our best endeavors to cultivate the kind feelings, not only of our native countries, but of all the powers or States with whom we may have intercourse."[2]

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[1] Oregon Archives, p. 70.
[2] Lang, "History of the Willamette Valley," p. 286.
[3] Spectator, May 28, 1846.
[4] Spectator, October 14, 1847.

Though not subscribing to the idea set forth by their Canadian neighbors that "the more laws there are, the greater opportunity for roguery," the colonists were conservative in the amount and kind of legislation enacted. The message of the Executive Committee to the legislature of 1845 says: "While we deem it important to invite your attention to a necessity of the revision and amendment of the Organic and other laws * * * and the framing of others that you may deem necessary at this time, we would not conceal the fact that great difficulty might arise from too much legislation."[3]

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[1] Oregon Archives, p. 71.
[2] Oregon Archives, p. 71.
[3] Oregon Archives, Ms., p. 48.

Sufficient has been said to indicate the high order of political ability of these pioneer state builders. A few of them in after years became influential in the national councils, when their loyalty to established government as manifested in these days, was exerted in support of the national cause which their party had in the main deserted.[1] A few rose in ability to the position of real statesmen whose resourcefulness and qualities of mind and heart would have made them marked men anywhere. Such was Jesse Applegate.[2] The majority had that political aptitude which rendered them typical Americans —able to make any government work.

Summing up the political characteristics of the Oregon pioneers, we find them to be thoroughly American and nationalistic in their political ideals and tendencies, but at the same time thoroughly independent and ready to prove themselves self-sufficient on due occasion; personally ambitious for political advancement; suspicious of too freely exercised executive authority; slow to subject themselves to the financial burdens of government; opposed to the existence of slavery and the presence of the Negro; determined that their government should be one by the people, and that their representatives should be truly representative; conservative in legislation and liberal and moderate in administration; possessed of a high order of political capability.

As might be expected, there was no political alignment in the period of the Provisional Government except along local lines as were naturally drawn from the exigencies of the situation in the isolated, jointly occupied territory. Making up the population we find: those connected directly with the Hudson's Bay Company, the Catholic missionaries, the Protestant missionaries, the French Canadian settlers, the Mountain Men and the independent American settlers. The part which the Protestant missionaries early took in establishing American influence, strengthened what would have been at any rate the natural alliance between the Company and the Catholics.[1] With these two went the Canadians, the three elements making one main party variously denominated as the Hudson's Bay, English, or, after the latter had come in under the Provisional Government, the Independent party. On the other side, the independent American settlers, the Protestant missionaries and the Mountain Men represented the American interests. In general these were the two main opposing parties or influences. There was a further division among the Americans into the Mission and American parties, with little local conditions and prejudices coming in from time to time to affect and modify this general alignment. The Missionary party was rather looked upon as representing the aristocracy and vested interests of the settlement from the United States.[2] The American party, made up of the Mountain Men and independent settlers, opposed the tendencies toward independent government and was strongly nationalistic . Though in a minority, the English or independent party held the balance of power. This is well demonstrated in the election of governors in 1845 and again in 1847. In the first case the candidates of the three parties were: American, A. L. Lovejoy; Independent, Osborne Russell; Mission, also denominated "American," George Abernethy. The Independents, having no hope of success, and wishing to defeat the more aggressive of the American candidates, threw their support to Abernethy, who was elected, though the "American" party won a sweeping victory with its legislative ticket.[3] In 1847 Lovejoy and Abernethy again opposed each other and again the English element defeated the former. In the two counties north of the Columbia, Vancouver and Lewis, the Independent stronghold, Abernethy received 111 votes and Lovejoy but 11. The latter was defeated by 16 votes only, in the whole Territory, which shows what a factor the British or Independent vote was in the result.[1]

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[1] Notably, J. W. Nesmith.

[2] Samuel Bowles, editor of the Springfield Republican, visited the Coast in 1866 and in his book "Across the Continent," p. 177, tells of visiting Applegate and "finding a vigorous old man. . . clear, strong and original in thought and its expression, with views upon our public affairs worthy the head of our wisest; every way indeed such a man as you wonder to find here in the woods, rejoice to find anywhere and hunger to have in his rightful position, conspicuous in the government." Cf. L. F. Grover, "Notable Things in a Public Life in Oregon," Ms., pp. 75, 80. M. P. Deady, annual address before Oregon Pioneer Association, 1875. Proceedings, p. 36. J. W. Nesmith, ibid., p. 62.

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[1] Grover, "Notable Things," etc., Ms., p. 90. A. G. Walling, "Southern Oregon," p. 135.

[2] Thornton, "History of the Provisional Government," pp. 50, 51.

[3] Bancroft, Vol. 1, pp. 471, 472.

While the population of Oregon was grouped into parties as above outlined, there was practically no political or party organization and little or no unity of action. Under the caption, "On the Stump," the Spectator of May 14th, 1846, makes the announcement: "On Monday next (18th) the several candidates of Clackamas county will address their fellow citizens *from the stump* in Oregon City. This will be something *new* in Oregon." A report of the innovation is found in the issue of May 28th, from which the reluctance of the political aspirants to appear in the role set for them is apparent. The only strictly party significance found in their informal remarks as reported was the frequent assertion or clever implication of their Americanism as opposed to the interests of the British party. Their remarks were mostly addressed to the local needs in legislation to which little political significance can be attached. This lack of political organization is further indicated in an editorial in the same issue on the immediately forthcoming annual election. "We were never really less able even to guess at the probable result," says the editor, H. A. G. Lee. "Although we have a numerous array of candidates in this county * * * still in the absence of positive party, no regular or territorial ticket having been formed, but each relying on his friends, to succeed the best he may, or in other words 'on his own hook,' the most shrewd conjectures must at best be vague." The political inertia and apathy which seem to exist in the other counties is greatly deplored and a tacit argument is made for political organization as a means of arousing a sense of civic responsibility.

An event of great import in the growth of the new state was the starting of the first newspaper on the Pacific Coast.

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[1] Election returns found in Spectator, July 22, 1847.

It is its relation to the strictly political life of the community that is of concern here. On February 5th, 1846, appeared the first number of the Oregon Spectator, already referred to, published by the Oregon Printing Association, the latter governed by a written constitution. Article 8 of the articles of Compact of that Constitution as published in the first issue of the Spectator reads: "The press owned by or in connection with this association, shall never be used by any party for the purpose of propagating sectarian principles or doctrines, nor for the discussion of exclusive party politics." In the provision made for the amendment of the various articles, the 8th is expressly excepted. Among the officers the various elements of population are well represented. The policy and attitude of the paper, politically, is clearly set forth by the editor, W. G. T'Vault, in the following very significant salutatory:

TO THE PUBLIC.

> "The printing press, type and materials are owned by the Oregon Printing Association and that Association has adopted a Constitution to govern the concerns of the Association as well as the publishing of the newspaper; consequently, the Spectator will have to keep within the pale of that Constitution, otherwise it violates the commands of its owners. A large majority of the citizens of Oregon are emigrants from the United States, and for the last twenty years, politics have there been the order of the day. * * * Hence it is to be presumed that a portion of the citizens of Oregon have brought with them their views of policy, entertained while residing in the United States. It might also be expected that the Oregon Spectator would be a political paper; but reason and good sense argue differently. Situated as we are—remote from the civilized settlements of the United States, and at this time having no protection but that which is afforded us by the Provisional Government of Oregon and having but one interest to represent and that interest the welfare of Oregon and the citizens unanimously * * * it would be bad policy to break

> open old wounds and in doing so to create new ones, to discuss politics in the columns of the Spectator—notwithstanding we are now, as we have always been, and ever shall be, a democrat of the Jeffersonian school."

The final self-assertive, half defiant declaration of the old democratic war horse is as significant as it is amusing. As far as the writer has found, here was the first public declaration on national politics and that in an article arguing that all such should be avoided. It was an earnest of how successful the censorship of the press would be in stifling political discussion in a typical American community. That the personal avowal of political allegiance did not appeal to the owners of the paper as a logical conclusion to a declaration of political neutrality, is evident. Within two months appears T'Vault's defiant valedictory, in which he says: "The political sentiments avowed were at war with some of the present aristocracy of the land notwithstanding the avowal that the columns of the Spectator should be kept within the construction of the Constitution of the printing association."[1] Having in mind apparently the American population, he continues: "That there is [sic] two distinct parties in Oregon no one will for a moment doubt, differing, however, not upon those great fundamental principles * * * as is the case with our fellow-citizens in the United States, but upon subjects less worthy of name. We have amongst us a class of mungralls, neither American nor anti-American—a kind of foreign hypocritical go-betweens, as we would say in the states—fence men." T'Vault explains that while the excuse given for his dismissal was that his syntax and orthography were bad (alas, too true) the real reason was that he didn't boost the aforementioned aristocracy, referring doubtless to Governor Abernethy and the Missionary influence. He warns this "junto of aristocracy in and about Oregon City" who think they have the right to manage matters as best suit their views that they will have to reckon with the hardy freemen who are rapidly settling Oregon and who are as independent as the air they breathe. As a parting shot he voices the hope that the next legislature will have nothing to do further than to be convened and to receive the valedictory of the present governor of Oregon and the inaugural of Gov. Atchison or some other good democrat sent by President Polk. Exit T'Vault.

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[1] Spectator, April 2, 1846.

The new editor, H. A. G. Lee, named the subjects which could be discussed in the Spectator, including politics, but explained—"Politics, as we understand the term, means the science of government and not the effervescence of fermenting partyism or the noisy froth of spouting demagogues."[1] Lee withdrew in August and in indicating the reason the Spectator shows another factor in the situation to have been the English element. "Our paper will yet be edited to the satisfaction of at least a majority of the subscribers—that it will give satisfaction to certain individuals and their friends who are subscribers we do not flatter ourselves. But one thing we do venture to affirm, that, let it sink or swim, the columns of the Spectator shall be open for the publication of all matter that shall have for its object the advocating of American interests in this country and their right to the soil, in preference to any other nation on the globe—even to John Bull himself. That a paper published by Americans in Oregon and that paper too the only channel through which the interests and feelings of the Americans in Oregon can be made known to the world, should be restricted in its publications and so conducted as to meet the approbation and save the feelings of some whose principles and views are to all intents and purposes anti-American, is preposterous in the extreme and not to be thought for a moment."[2]

Editor number three was Geo. L. Curry; his announced policy: "It will be our aim to give this journal a firm and consistent American tone."[3] When Nesmith, in the legislature of 1847 had introduced his resolutions denouncing the secret appointment of Thornton by Gov. Abernethy as agent of the Provisional Government at Washington, Curry secured them for publication in defiance of the Board of Directors and was forced out by the Abernethy following. In his lengthy adieu Curry says he refused to edit a one man paper edited in that man's own interest, as demanded; hence his dismissal. He strongly deprecates the establishment of the censorship of the press in Oregon.[1]

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[1] Spectator, April 16, '46.
[2] Spectator, August 20, '46.
[3] Ibid., October 1, '46.

So much notice of the early editorial history and difficulties of the Spectator has been given for three or four reasons. It gives, through T'Vault, the first evidence of that linking of isolated Oregon with national politics which was to dominate her political future, to the minimizing of her natural local interests. It gives a striking picture of the political situation in Oregon during the period—of the party or sectional jealousies existing. It tells the story of the attempt to enforce the censorship of the press in the new territory and indicates how futile such an attempt would be in a community of typical western Americans whose shibboleth was freedom and who had written "freedom of the press" as a guaranteed right in their fundamental law. It furnishes us the connecting link between two periods, the Provisional Government and the Territorial. The new paper, with all its problems, marks a transition from the old to the new—from the local and the isolated to the expansive and the national.

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[1] Spectator, January 20, '48.

PART II

THE PERIOD OF TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT— POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION OF THE OREGON DEMOCRACY

Not until two years after the settlement of the Oregon question between the United States and Great Britain, did Congress take action looking toward giving Oregon a territorial organization. The delay was occasioned by Southern members who objected to the anti-slavery clause in the proposed organic act. Not that they entertained a serious hope of seeing slavery established in Oregon. They fought in the first place the recognition of the principle that slavery could be excluded from any of the territories, and later, to force concessions favorable to them in the organization of the territory so recently acquired from Mexico. After a long and determined opposition on the part of the pro-slavery element in stubborn allegiance to its sacred institution, the Oregon Territorial bill became a law on August 14th, 1848. From that hour there was a decided change in the political situation in Oregon. The viewpoint was shifted; the view enlarged. The old lines of division began to fade. It is true some of the local jealousies remained and were for a time to continue to be factors in politics, but the focus was different. Oregon was now linked with the United States and with its political life. The very fact of the passage of the territorial bill meant that a party president would appoint party office holders to exercise national supervision over the new territory. As the old local lines of division began to disappear, in the new conditions men began to remember their old political affiliations held "back in the States." But though the change in the point of view was decided and was generally felt, and its significance appreciated, it took some time for political action to adapt itself to the new order. There was a period of transition in which the old had not been forgotten and put aside and in which the new had not been fully espoused—a period in which political conditions were reshaping themselves in preparation for new and national alignments. First to emerge in organization from this political interregnum was the Oregon Democratic party.

Elected in a close campaign for which Oregon had furnished the slogan, President Polk was anxious that the new Territory should be organized during his term of office. To this end he urged his appointee for governor, General Joseph Lane of Indiana, to make all haste on his long journey in order to assume control before March 4, 1849. Arriving at Oregon City March 2nd, on the following day he issued a proclamation extending the laws of the United States over the Territory of Oregon.[1] Oregon was thus started on her territorial career under the auspices of the Democratic party and by a man whose future was to be linked inseparably with that of the new territory. The history of the next decade was to show how thoroughly fitting and significant was such a beginning.

One of the first matters of importance incident to the new relationship which Oregon had assumed was the election of a delegate to Congress. In this election no national party lines were drawn. The factors governing it were found in the old local conditions, affected by the new territorial government. What the attitude of the Government would be toward recognizing property rights of the British interests as represented by the Hudson's Bay Company, was the vital question. The American settlers were quick to suspect the latter of designs on large parts of the domain north of the Columbia and were as quick to resent them. This attitude furnished the issue of the campaign. It resulted in the election, June 6, 1849, of Samuel R. Thurston, the most vigorous opponent of the foreign interests, among the five candidates, and supported by the Mission party. Though recognized as a strong Democrat, as were some of his competitors, it was as a partisan in local affairs that he made his campaign for election.[2] The policy he pursued in Congress was consistent with this local platform on which he had been chosen as delegate. Serving at a time when the sectional spirit was so dominant at Washington, he found the Pacific Coast to be "in the angle of cross fires." As a result, in order not to impair his influence, he "shut the book of partisan politics" and turned his attention solely to the material needs of his constituents, securing the passage of the much desired donation land law.[1]

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[1] Joseph Lane, "Autobiography," Ms., pp. 4, 5.

[2] Mrs. W. H. Odell, "Autobiography of Thurston.," Ms, pp. 4, 5.

If Oregon needed a striking reminder of the fact that henceforth she was of necessity to experience the exigencies of national political life—that her future was inevitably linked with the party fortunes of the nation, such reminder came promptly. Her citizens had hardly accustomed themselves to the new situation when their new officials were replaced by newer ones by the incoming Whig administration. And as if the very fact of such a sudden change were not of itself sufficient, the lesson was emphasized by contributing conditions. With enough of the demagogue in his make-up to render him a typical successful politician of his day, Lane had so addressed himself to the Oregonians and so adapted himself to local conditions as to put himself in thorough accord and harmony with the people. He was popular from the start. The fact that the majority of his constituents were fellow democrats contributed to this entente cordiale, but he was generally popular regardless of party distinction. He was a man of the people. His Whig successor, General John P. Gaines, was just the opposite. Pompous and aristocratic in bearing, he was tactless in action and overzealous in exerting his authority. At best it was somewhat repugnant to these western Americans, used to governing themselves, to be placed under what they considered foreign officials; under such a man as Gaines it was positively galling. In this situation and in what grew out of it, is to be found the beginning of political parties in Oregon in the national sense. It will hereafter be developed how clever politicians, working upon the popular prejudice, used such a condition to force political organization.

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[1] Circular address issued by Thurston to Oregon voters, from Washington, D. C., Nov. 15, 1850.

At the session of the territorial legislature which met at Oregon City December 2nd, 1850, that apple of discord in Oregon politics—the capital location question—made its appearance. The two contestants were Oregon City and Salem. The latter had the advantage of location and naturally, also, the support of the Mission element which had already made Salem its center. The location bill, giving Salem the capital, Portland the penitentiary and Corvallis the university, passed both houses by a total vote of 16 to 11.[1] While the bill was before the legislature, Gov. Gaines sent in a special message criticizing it. He showed that inasmuch as it contained more than one provision it was in violation of that section of the act of Congress organizing the territory which provided that a law must embrace but one object and that object expressed in its title. Unsolicited advice was also given in regard to the manner of expending appropriations. This gratuitous interference with the legislative part of the government was bitterly resented by those legislators who were naturally suspicious of executive authority. Their sense of freedom in self-government was outraged. Their dislike of the man, as well as the dislike of his politics by the majority of the members,[2] added to the dissatisfaction. In a defiant mood the bill was passed without the changes suggested. The Whig governor was thus associated with the Oregon City side of the contention—his Democratic opponents with that of Salem. The line of cleavage had been found.

On March 28th, following the adjournment of the legislature in February, appeared the first number of the Oregon Statesman. Through its editor, Asahel Bush, cold, calculating, relentless, it was to dominate Oregon politics for a decade, making and breaking politicians at will. It announced that in politics it would be Democratic and pledged its efforts in behalf of the integrity and unity of the party in Oregon, bidding defiance to the unmerited assaults of the political opposition. Whenever the Democracy should organize the Statesman would be the uncompromising advocate of regular nominations—the only manner by which a party could give efficiency to its action and success to its principles. Thus in its very salutatory it made a tacit argument for party organization, thereby suggesting its own raison d'etre. Bush at once began the movement for organization. He wrote letters to Democrats asking for contributed articles in favor of such political action,[1] which explains the rather spontaneous effusions in the Statesman by "Pro Bono Publico," "Jeffersonian," "Democracy," and their political kinsmen, from over the Territory. But at the same time Bush did not allow the enthusiasm of youth to overthrow the caution of the successful, practical politician he was. Requested to urge the importance of electing democrats to the legislature in the June election, 1851, he replied that in the absence of an organization such a course would lose them more Whig votes than it would gain them Democratic.[2] In the very next issue following the election, however, which had revealed encouraging Democratic strength, the leading editorial in the Statesman was headed, "Organization of Democracy."[3]

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[1] Bancroft, Vol. II., p. 146.
[2] Oregon Statesman, March 26, 1851.

The choice of a delegate to Congress was also before the people in the Spring of 1851. Thurston, after an able and diligent term, was on the way home to face opposition for his unfair treatment of Dr. McLoughlin in the donation land bill. Lane had been mentioned to succeed him and in March was unanimously nominated at a meeting of the citizens of Yamhill County at LaFayette, at which Lane's personal friend, Gen. Joel Palmer, presided. The prospect of a contest between two such influential and aggressive Democrats was far from reassuring to Bush and those who were carefully laying plans for the organization of their party. Harmony and unanimity of action were necessary for success, and such a contest as this, which threatened factional strife and jealousy was much to be deprecated. Bush felt the delicacy and embarrassment of his position keenly and declared privately that he would pursue an independent course in his paper and uphold party rather than its individual members.[1] The assuming of an attitude of neutrality by Bush, in the light of his later career, is almost unthinkable. The political situation was thus greatly relieved by the death of the returning delegate. On May 2nd, the Statesman announced the demise of Thurston and likewise noticed the return of Lane from the California mines. In the next issue, May 9th, Bush came out strongly for Lane, explaining the Statesman's previous neutral attitude in the fact of there being no organization or nomination to decide between the Democratic candidates. But now there was but one candidate in the field and the Statesman would support him in behalf of the political creed of which he was the exponent. It believed thoroughly in his devotion to the principles, usages and interests of the great Democratic party. Bush thus forced to the front the recognition of political differences in the delegate question, there being no opposing Whig candidate—a position which he had refused to take on the legislative ticket. At the same time the Oregonian, which in its first issue, December 4th, 1850, had announced active allegiance to the "present administration and all the principles of the great Whig party" was now becoming non-partisan in tone. It demanded only a high-minded man of ability and would not stop to inquire to what party he belonged.[2] Meanwhile another candidate entered the field in the person of W. H. Willson. Though primarily representing the Missionary influence which had supported Thurston, he, too, was a Democrat. Hence, Bush, though personally favorable to Lane, and having announced that he would support him, is evidently so solicitous for party harmony that he has not a word more to say in his favor during the remainder of the campaign. The Milwaukie Star, Democratic, was more outspoken. It could not for a moment give countenance to Willson's candidacy against a brother Democrat, which would stir up strife in the party. While pleading for party unity, the Star at the same time naively asks the Whigs to support Lane. It urges that in so doing they will lose no political strength as the delegate has no vote in Congress; that both Whigs and Democrats will be equal participators in every measure he brings about for Oregon's advancement.[1] Lane himself, both publicly and privately, took a non-partisan stand which was inclined to disarm any partisan opposition.[2] Both candidates were Democrats but neither ran as such.[3] The four newspapers—the Oregonian and Spectator,[4] Whig, and the Statesman and Star, Democratic—were committed more or less actively to Lane,[5] who was elected by a vote of 1,911 to 426.

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[1] Private Correspondence, Bush to M. P. Deady, April 1, 1851.
[2] Ibid, May 17, 1851.
[3] Statesman, June 13, 1851.

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[1] Bush to Deady, April 17, 1851.
[2] Oregonian, March 8, 1851.

In the Statesman of June 13th, immediately after the election, appeared a call for a democratic convention to be held July 4th at Salem for the purpose of effecting a permanent organization of the party in Marion county. Bush heartily endorsed the movement editorially and expressed his satisfaction in the fact that it was general throughout the Territory. By this time the question of party organization had become a definite issue. The Democrats, clearly in the majority and smarting under the dominance of Whig officials, took a strong position in the affirmative. The Marion county convention above mentioned passed strong resolutions on the subject. Those resolutions maintained that political parties are inseparable from a free government; that the only natural division of parties in this country is that which has existed since the contest between Jefferson and Adams, under the names of

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[1] Star, May 22, 1851.

[2] Personal Correspondence, Lane to J. W. Nesmith, May 27, 1851.

[3] Statesman, June 23, 1857, in retrospect.

[4] While the Spectator did not become a distinctively partisan paper until early in 1852, it was Whig in attitude.

[5] Star, May 22, 1851.

Republican and Democrat and Federal or Whig; and that Democratic principles are[1] as applicable to Oregon as to any other portion of the nation. These and other arguments were voiced continually in the Statesman. The democrats were already looking toward a state organization under which they could elect their own officials and it was urged that party machinery should be perfected in anticipation of statehood.[2] Extracts from Eastern papers, both Whig and Democratic, appear, in which the system of party organization and discipline is upheld.

The opposite position was as firmly taken by the Whigs. They maintained that the people of Oregon, far from the center of political strife, should not be distracted by the fires of partisan passion. Attention should rather be turned to the local needs of Oregon. The citizens of the Territory should work unitedly in behalf of those material interests which were not political in their nature. The zeal of the Democrats in the matter was attributed to the ambition of aspiring politicians for place and power. In reply the Statesman asked—"Who first roused the slumbering fires of party feeling in Oregon? Ask the party which has swarmed the Territory with Whig officers, pledged and sworn to aid the schemes and promote the interests of Whiggery." The Whigs asserted that Gen. Lane was opposed to party organization, calling to mind his declaration of non-partisanship in the preceding campaign. In answer Bush quoted a letter from Lane, from Washington, dated December 22, 1851, in which he said: "I am glad to witness your efforts to get a Democratic organization. Lose no time in urging the Democrats to organize and unite. All local and sectional issues should be dropped. With the organization and union of the Democracy all will be well in Oregon."[3] This was a rude awakening to the Whigs who had accepted the olive branch held out to them by Lane in June.

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[1] Statesman, July 15, 1851.

[2] Statesman, June 13, 1851.
Oregon Weekly Times, Nov. 22, 1851. The Times, published at Portland, was the successor of the Western Star, which had been published at Milwaukie until June, 1851.

[3] Statesman, February 24, 1852.

As a contributive force to the movement for Democratic organization, Bush began gradually to reopen the capital location question in the Statesman. The governor maintained his position that the location act was invalid and therefore not binding upon him. On this ground he refused to concur in the expenditure of the appropriations for public buldings. This action had the force of a veto upon the bill as the attorney-general of the United States had given his opinion that the governor's concurrence was necessary to make such expenditure legal.[1] General dissatisfaction resulted and the hostility to Governor Gaines increased. A perusal of the personal correspondence of some of the Democratic leaders at this time shows that there was a hesitancy felt by some in forcing this issue as a basis for party alignment. The aggressiveness of Bush in the matter was questioned by his colleagues in 1851. He maintained privately that while he did not "consider it exactly a political matter, yet the parties concerned necessarily make it somewhat so, especially if we look ahead a few years."[2] His influence was apparently dominant in the matter as some of the conservative ones soon became the most active in the cause. The Statesman of September 16th contained a three-column contributed article on the location law from the Salem point of view, signed "Yamhill" and evidently written by M. P. Deady of La Fayette, to whom Bush had written only the month before, justifying himself. Deady was one of the most prominent of the young Democratic leaders and was a man of marked ability. Bush called attention to the article editorially, justifying the amount of space given to it by the importance of the subject and the ability and research with which it was discussed. And in view of its importance to the people of Oregon, he invited communications "from all sources and upon all sides, written in the spirit of courtesy, candor and honest inquiry which characterizes the one we publish today."[1] Thus was the troublesome question opened up which was soon to stir the whole Territory in most bitter partisan strife.

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[1] Bancroft, Vol. II., p. 160.

[2] Bush to Deady, August 19, 1851. "Now Deady just place yourself in my position with a very natural feeling of hostility to the band of government officers . . . and tell me in what respect you would have taken a different course."

The issue was squarely joined with the meeting of the legislature the first of December, 1851. The Democratic members, greatly in the majority,[2] gathered at Salem in accordance with the provision of the location bill. The Whig minority held the latter to be void and four members of the house and one of the council met at Oregon City. Party alignment was definitely made on the issue. The supreme court became involved in the political controversy. The act of Congress organizing the Territory required the court to hold annual sessions at the capital. The time for the session arrived and the two Whig judges, Wm. Strong and Thos. Nelson, constituting a quorum, met at Oregon City; the Democratic judge, O. C. Pratt, who had been appointed by President Polk, at Salem. This fact greatly emphasized the partisan nature of the contest. Bush and the Democratic leaders had played their game cleverly. They had made an issue between the elected representatives of the people on one hand and the disliked, appointed officials on the other. Always quick to resent outside interference in their affairs, the majority of the people rallied to the support of the legislature at Salem which had organized and proceeded with business. The controversy became violent and was by no means allayed at the adjournment of the legislature or even by the act of the next session of Congress which confirmed the location bill and legalized the Salem session of the legislature.[3] The capital fight became if possible increasingly bitter and more far-reaching in its influences. And the strife seemed to be as heated in naturally neutral localities as in those directly interested, owing to the presence and activity of zealous politicians.[4]

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[1] Statesman, September 16, 1851.

[2] Ibid., July 4, 1851.

[3] Statesman, June 29, 1852.

[4] Personal conversation with Hon. J. C. Nelson on situation in Yamhill County.

The line of division, however, was not wholly or perfectly made in accordance with past political associations. In some cases the controversy caused a transference of party fealty which had an important influence in the history of the state; notably in the case of Dr. James McBride.[1] He had been a Democrat in Tennessee and Missouri, but took the Oregon City side of the fight, became a leading Whig and one of the founders of the Republican party in Oregon. His son, J. R. McBride, was the first Republican Congressman to represent the state and another son, Geo. W. McBride, in more recent years, was sent to the United States Senate by the same party. No family has, perhaps, been more prominent in the political annals of the state. This is but an example of the far-reaching political influence of this early capital location issue. In other cases sides were taken regardless of party. Jesse Applegate, most irreconcilable of Whigs, took the Salem side of the question.[2] Some, also, who had property interests to consider, took sides irrespective of party. Democrats of Oregon City and Clackamas county entered a vigorous protest against making a party issue of the controversy, which would place them with their political opponents or array them against their own personal interests. These Democrats and the Whigs joined in an attempt to stem the tide which had set in towards party organization. At a mass meeting held on April 15th, 1852, at Milwaukie, the vote was unanimous against the propriety of drawing party lines in Oregon.[3] Resolutions were adopted which deprecated the attempts "of most of our public journals" to base party movements on personalities and local, sectional strife. They also concurred in the call for a mass meeting to be held at Oregon City, April 6th, to nominate candidates for the approaching election, without distinction of party. At this Oregon City meeting Judge W. W. Buck announced that as a Democrat he was opposed to the attempt made to organize the Democratic party upon the basis of local issues and personal quarrels. The fact of the non-partisanship of the meeting was strongly emphasized. In its resolutions a note of warning was sounded against the practice of disregarding established courts and the legally constituted authorities. Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Jackson and Polk were quoted at length, giving warning against the encroachments of legislative power upon the other two departments and upholding the authority of the courts. In the same issue[1] there also appeared a letter from "Independence," the purpose of which was to show the non-political nature of the location fight. The controversy was not Whig and Democrat—not high or low tariff, not North or South, slavery or abolition, it was asserted, but merely location and anti-location. "With what face then can the Salemites declare this contest to be between Whigs and Democrats? Do not be deceived, brother Democrats. The controversy is purely local . . . and has not the least bearing on any doctrine in dispute between the two great political parties. This contest turns upon another hinge altogether. There is a thirsty, office-seeking class of demagogues who desire, for their own promotion, to organize the party, and something inflammatory that will rouse and excite our party to sectional antipathies must be heralded forth." This letter is very typical of the spirit of the opposition. Week after week Editor Dryer of the Oregonian attacked the Democratic leaders with acrid and defiant pen. In return the epithets of "nullifiers" and "Encarnacionists"[2] were freely applied to the Whigs and those who espoused the cause of Oregon City.

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[1] Conversation with Hon. J. C. Nelson.
[2] Private correspondence, Applegate to Deady, January 26, 1852.
[3] Oregonian, May 8, 1852.

A rather notable incident of those stirring times was the appearance, shortly after the adjournment of the legislature, of a political satire by the versatile W. L. Adams, who was to become an important factor in Oregon politics. It was entitled "Breakspear—A Melodrame entitled Treason, Stratagems and Spoils." In it the Democratic leaders were cleverly caricatured and the inspiration of the organization of the Democracy was shown to be the desire of the Salem faction to secure the capital. The "Dramatis Personae" were easily recognizable and the characterizations were so apt, the plot so real and vivid, that the drama made a sensation. It appeared first in the Oregonian and was then published in pamphlet form illustrated with rude engravings. Two editions of the pamphlet were issued. It was considered of such moment by the Democratic politicians that they took pains to secure all the copies possible and retire them from circulation.[1] The actors are portrayed as crafty, conscienceless villains, intriguing for personal gain. They make tools of the stupid people whose tenacity is such for what they term Democracy, which not one in five hundred comprehends,

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[1] Oregonian, May 8, 1852.

[2] Gov. Gaines was held up to contempt by the Democrats because in the Mexican war he had surrendered at Encarnacion, and, it was asserted, without offering adequate resistance.

> "That we have only to name our present
> Project, a pure Democratic measure
> And represent ourselves as its defenders,
> And the whole furious and headlong band
> Will rally round us, like Spanish cattle
> Ready to swear that all we say is true."[2]

The production is more than a clever satire. A study of it throws great light on the political situation of the day. Some of the characters involved were ever afterwards known in Oregon politics by the names by which they were designated in "Breakspear."

The Democrats, through the press and through convention resolutions, vehemently denied the charge that they were attempting to organize their party on the location issue. They strongly deprecated the strife and dissension existing, responsibility for which they laid upon their opponents.[3] Bush found such a course necessary in order to placate what he termed privately the "tender footed, toady Democrats," who berated the Statesman, denouncing it as too violent. He went so far as to ask his friend Deady if he would not get a resolution passed by his county convention sanctioning the manner in which the Statesman had been conducted.[1]

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[1] Conversation with Geo. H. Himes.

[2] From a copy of the pamphlet in the possession of Mr. Himes, curator of Oregon Historical Society Collection.

[3] Statesman editorial, "Democratic Issues," March 9, 1852.

Resolution passed by Yamhill County Democratic Convention: "Resolved, That by an organization of the Democratic party upon its long-established and well-known principles, we hope to forever put to rest those local and personal factions which, in times gone by, have been so fruitful a source of discord in our public councils."—Statesman, May 12, 1852.

In spite of all the obstructive tactics employed by the Whigs and minority Democrats, party organization was steadily progressing. During the session of the last legislature, a Democratic caucus had been held at which it was unanimously resolved that it was "expedient to organize the Democratic party in the Territory of Oregon."[2] A central committee was chosen for one year, of which J. W. Nesmith was chairman.[3] Dates were set for the holding of county conventions throughout the territory. This was the first step toward a general, systematic organization. Nearly all these conventions passed resolutions to the effect that political parties are inseparable from a republican form of government; that they constitute the surest means of selecting faithful and competent servants. They very generally vindicated the Salem legislataure and denounced the obstructive measures of the two federal judges and the Whig officials as a whole. There was no united opposition to the various county Democratic tickets nominated by these conventions. The non-partisan convention of Clackamas county has already been noticed. In other counties "Law and Order" tickets were put out.[4] In Umpqua county there was a Whig ticket. Bush urged all to vote the straight Democratic ticket, which is the first appearance in Oregon of this old party slogan, "Vot'er straight."[5] The June election, 1852, was very favorable to the Democrats. The opposition carried but two counties, Clackamas and Washington. The result was divided in Yamhill. In commenting upon the result, Bush said the

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[1] Bush to Deady, April 8, 1852.
[2] Statesman, January 27, 1852.
[3] Nesmith to Deady, February 6, 1852.
[4] Oregonian, May 8, 1852.
[5] Statesman, April 27, 1852.

GENERAL JOSEPH LANE

FIRST TERRITORIAL GOVERNOR, DELEGATE TO CONGRESS, U. S. SENATOR.
CANDIDATE FOR VICE PRESIDENT ON BRECKENRIDGE TICKET, 1860

verdict triumphantly sustained the legislature and declared in favor of party organization. "The propriety of our recent organization, though hastily and imperfectly got up, and the necessity and expediency of keeping it up in all future contests, will scarcely hereafter be questioned by any reflecting democrat."[1]

It is only by a study of the newspapers of the period that one can appreciate the party rancor that by this time existed. Epithets unprintable, now, were hurled back and forth as freely as if they were the mere social amenities of the day. Judge Pratt was considered the Democratic leader, with Bush as the power behind the throne, and his followers and the party in general were known as Durhamites.[2] The extreme partisanship of the Democrats in their hatred of the Whig officials, was forcibly displayed in the following session of the legislature, in '52 and '53. The mere sending by Gov. Gaines of a message to the assembly roused a storm of opposition from the Democrats. A resolution was at once introduced to the effect that as the legislative department was independent of the executive, the further consideration of the message be indefinitely postponed.[3] The discussion which followed was long, heated and often grandiose.[4] It was made to appear that in the innocent and inoffensive message lurked a deadly enemy of civil liberty! "Overthrowing the bulwarks of American liberty," "the clanking chains of the despot," "insidious wiles of designing men," are examples of expression which characterized the onslaught.[5] At the same time the message itself was decried as inane and unworthy of consideration. The danger "lies in the encroachment of executive power, which like the stealthy crawl of the moonlit crocodile, approaches its victim." The resolution carried, but only by the close vote of 12 to 10. The vote is significant for it is important to note that thus early is found a dissenting minority in the Democratic ranks which refuses to be drawn to the extreme insisted upon by the radical leaders. In the discussion one member[1] warned his rabid colleagues that the pursuance of the course they were adopting would ruin the Democratic party. His Democracy was immediately challenged by a radical,[2] who insinuated that he was like others in the Territory "who picked up their Democracy as they crossed the Rocky Mountains." The reply is highly suggestive of the high-handed manner in which the ring Democrats promptly read out of the party all those who questioned their methods. The term National Democrats was this early applied to those who desired to base their party allegiance on broader grounds, to distinguish them from the Durham faction or the machine.[3]

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[1] Statesman, June 15, 1852.

[2] Pratt had sold a band of Spanish cattle which he had purchased from a man named Durham, for a high price, the purchaser having been led to believe he was buying blooded Durham stock.

[3] Oregonian, December 18, 1852.

[4] Ibid., January 8, 1852.

[5] J. K. Hardin: "I feel it my duty, as one of the sentinels placed by the people to guard the citadel of their rights, to meet him (Gov. Gaines) at the threshhold and say, 'Stop! Thus far shalt thou go but no farther.'"

The action of the legislature was the inspiration of tireless invective on the part of the Oregonian. It charged that the warfare waged against Gaines was for the purpose of deceiving the new immigrants and winning them into the embrace of Durhamism;[4] that the welfare of the people was neglected and necessary legislative measures stifled for the furtherance of political schemes; that measures of the Durham members were passed while those of the National Democrats and Whigs were killed with the purpose of killing their authors;[5] that deception, falsehood, vilification, and assault were in Oregon synonymous with the word "Democracy," which was but another term for "Prattocracy"; that the sole idea of the political gamblers was that "Prattism must prevail," that they might secure place and power.[6] As has been suggested, there was a strong conviction at the time of the organization of the territorial government that offices should be filled by Oregon men rather than by men imported from the East. Charges were made in 1851 that the district judges were not holding their terms of court regularly and that as a result justice was delayed and criminals had escaped. This increased the general dissatisfaction with imported officials, especially as they were Whigs. The independent, if not impertinent, attitude of the people is exemplified in a resolution adopted at a public meeting in Portland, April 1, 1851: "Resolved—That the President of the United States be respectfully informed that there are many respectable individuals in Oregon capable of discharging the duties devolving upon the judges, as well as filling any other office under the territorial government, who would either discharge the duties or resign the office.[1] The very first business transacted by the legislature which met in the following December, was to draft a joint memorial asking Congress to amend the organic act so as to permit the election by the people of all the territorial officers. Blissful confidence was expressed that Congress would graciously accede to the request. Nevertheless a bill was passed to the effect that if Congress should be so inconsiderate as to adjourn without granting the petition, a special election should be called within sixty days to vote upon the question of calling a convention to frame a state constitution.[2] Democratic mass meetings and conventions followed all over the territory, at which the memorial was vigorously upheld. A few federal or "non-partisan" meetings are recorded which just as strenuously opposed it. The movement for statehood and the spirit of independence which demanded the popular election of all officers are inseparable in the history of Oregon Territory. Wherever either is brought to the front, the other is found as an underlying factor. They cannot be discussed separately.

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[1] F. A. Chenoweth of Clarke and Lewis counties.
[2] A. C. Gibbs of Umpqua county.
[3] Oregonian, January 22, 1853.
[4] Ibid., January 15, 1853.
[5] Ibid., March 5, 1853.
[6] Ibid., December 25, 1852.

As another presidential election approached, with indications favorable to the election of Pierce, the Democratic attitude toward statehood became less violent and the constitutional convention was not called. Bush, in stating his opposition to the convention privately, said that if Scott's election were certain and the petition for the election of officers certain not to be granted it would alter the case amazingly; but that in the prospect of the election of Pierce and of the passage of the memorial at the next session of Congress, they had a double prospect of relief.[1] In the legislature of '52-'53, the lower house voted 14 to 9 to submit the question of calling a constitutional convention to the people.[2] But the council, which was more strongly Democratic, rejected the proposition.[3] With the news of the election of Pierce the ardor of the Democrats for statehood was cooled, for Whig officials would now give way to Democratic appointees. On the other hand, the Whigs who had so strenuously opposed the movement now began to see its merits.

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[1] Statesman, April 11, 1851.
[2] Statesman, January 27, 1852.

The Democrats already had control of the legislative branch of the government and the executive would now be theirs. Judge Nelson had resigned and Lane had been instructed to prevent the confirmation of a successor by the Senate until the hoped-for Democratic administration should come into power, which would give the Durhamites the control of the judiciary.[4] The well laid plans of the Democratic leaders were rapidly developing. Nevertheless they did not expect to take any chances, even with their own party administration. The purpose of the first Democratic Territorial Convention was stated in the call to be the nomination of a candidate for delegate to Congress and "to recommend to the executive of the United States suitable persons to fill the various federal offices in this territory."[5] The appointments when made were very satisfactory indeed, all the officials but one being Oregonians. This gave the Democrats an appreciated opportunity for comparing the treatment of Oregon by the two Administrations. In an editorial on "The Difference," Bush says the places will be now filled by Oregonians and the salaries received and expended at home, instead of being "gobbled up by a set of foreign mercenaries and taken out of the country." The only consolation the Whigs had in the tide of Democratic success was found in the rejection by the Senate of the nomination of the Durham leader, Pratt, for chief justice.[1] General Lane, who was by this time the idol of the Oregon Democracy, returned to succeed Gaines as governor on May 16th. But this was merely to gratify the personal desire of Lane,[2] as it was understood that he would run again for delegate, he having in fact been already nominated. He accordingly resigned three days after succeeding Gaines, which elevated Geo. L. Curry, the secretary, to the position of governor.

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[1] Bush to Deady, September 3, 1852.

[2] Statesman, January 22, 1853.

[3] Ibid., March 12, 1853. In the same issue Bush recedes from the pronounced ground he had taken in the past. He says, editorially, the question should be "well and dispassionately" considered and speaks of the heavy expense of a state government.

[4] Bush to Deady, February, 1852.

[5] Statesman, January 22, 1853.

It has been shown that organization of the Democratic party in Oregon was first effected in 1852. It was not complete, but the several county conventions had put party tickets in the field and forced partisanship to the front. The issue of the movement as shown in the election results, and the triumphs of the Democracy which followed, served to confirm the Democrats in the determination to perfect a permanent organization. Flushed with success, they entered upon the campaign of 1853 with zeal and aggressiveness. The first Territorial Democratic convention met at Salem, April 11th and 12th, at the call of the Territorial central commmittee, appointed at the Democratic caucus the year previous. Lane was nominated to succeed himself as delegate, receiving 38 votes. M. P. Deady and Cyrus Olney, associate justices, received 11 and 5 votes respectively. The convention expressed itself as feeling the necessity, in organizing the party in Oregon, of making it "thorough, radical and efficient" and appealed for hearty co-operation to this end. It is interesting to note that the spirit of expansion which had taken hold of the National

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[1] Pratt's confirmation was defeated by Senator Douglas on personal grounds.

[2] Lane, Autobiography, Ms., p. 58.

Democracy and which was beginning to manifest itself in designs on Cuba, is reflected in this first Territorial convention in the far Northwest. The fifth resolution declared that the Sandwich Islands are a natural and almost necessary appendage to the American possessions on the Pacific Coast and that Oregon Territory feels a deep interest in their acquisition by the United States. It was resolved that any transcontinental railroad must include a branch from San Francisco to Puget Sound. The National Democratic platform of 1852 adopted at Baltimore was endorsed, thus introducing national issues into Oregon politics for the first time in this campaign of 1853.

The opposition to the Democracy still opposed political parties in Oregon. Hence, there was no organization or machinery for bringing out a candidate against Lane for delegate. However, A. A. Skinner, who had been a judge under the Provisional government, announced in a letter to the Oregonian of May 21st, that a portion of his fellow citizens "without distinction of party" had requested him to become a candidate and that he would comply. He proceeded to give his views, to the effect that parties are unnecessary and pernicious in a Territory; that their introduction is fraught with evil consequences—ill blood and strife. Despite his non-partisan pretensions Skinner argued ably for the good Whig doctrine of federal aid for internal improvements. The Oregonian forthwith put his name at its masthead under the caption of "The People's Party." The campaign was brief but hotly contested. On the one hand Lane was bitterly attacked for base deception in having sought office as a non-partisan, in pledging himself to support no political organization, even decrying political parties in a territory—and then completely changing front immediately after election.[1] On the other hand Skinner was characterized as a narrow, prejudiced federalist seeking to hide his partisan bias under the professions of no-partyism.[1] The Jackson County Democratic convention declared that the cry of "people's party" and "people's candidate" was but a new subterfuge behind which Whiggery sought to make a successful inroad into the ranks of Democracy "to steal the livery of heaven to serve the devil in."[2] The victory for the Democrats was decisive. Lane was elected by a vote of 4,529 to 2,959.[3] All the new members of the council were Democrats. Four Whigs or "People's Party" men were elected to the lower house—one each from Lane, Umpqua, Washington and Jackson counties. It was a victory for party organization. The Oregon Democracy was now thoroughly intrenched in the Territory—political parties had come to stay. Through it all the fine hand of Asahel Bush was discernible and his dictatorship in Oregon was clearly foreshadowed if indeed it had not already come to pass.

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[1] Oregonian, March 12, 1853.
Ibid., April 2, 1853.
Ibid., May 14, 1853.

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[1] Statesman, May 21, 1853.
[2] Statesman, May 8, 1853.
[3] Ibid., June 23, 1857.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF ANTI-DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATION

In the decisive Democratic victory of 1853 the Whigs finally read their lesson. They realized that party organization was inevitable. The Oregonian, with all the force of Dryer's vitriolic pen, attacked partyism right up to the end of the campaign. In the very next issue following the election, the versatile editor championed the cause of Whig organization and outlined a radical party platform.[1] He declared that the Durham Democrats had succeeded in duping the masses with the shibboleth of "Democracy," forcing those who were honest in their political opinions to take issue with them. "Therefore it becomes us, however much we may doubt that the good of the whole people demands a partisan course, under present circumstances to throw to the breeze the Whig banner." Here was the conception of the Oregon Whig party, "born as one out of due season." It was a posthumous child and was never to arrive at healthy maturity.[2]

The platform outlined by the Oregonian was clear-cut and comprehensive. As regards local conditions, it announced uncompromising opposition to the consolidation of power in the hands of a few political office hunters. It declared for legislation for the benefit of the people rather than of faction; for strict accountability of public officers; free lands for bona fide settlers; free speech and a free press, unawed by the threats of party demagogues; a system of naturalization by which every foreigner should be placed upon an equal footing with those in the Atlantic States. Nationally, the planks of the tentative platform were: A safe, speedy and economical system of internal improvements by the general government; encouragement of home productions by a discriminating tariff upon manufactures, adequate to the expenditures of an economic administration of the government; the construction of a railroad by the general government, from the Mississippi river to some point on the Pacific Coast, within the old boundaries of Oregon.

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[1] Oregonian, June 18, 1853.

[2] "The Sewer man (Dryer) is in favor of organizing the Whig party. Greeley of the New York Tribune says that the Whig party is dead in the states. But, like all animals of the reptile order, it dies in the extremities last; and him of the Sewer (the Oregonian) is the last agonizing knot of the tail."—Statesman, July 4, 1853.

Having given up the plea of non-partisanship, an unnatural position for a man of Dryer's pugnacious temperament, the Oregonian becomes at once a valiant party champion. Taking up his platform in detail, week after week, Dryer enunciates Whig principles and justifies Whig organization. He dwells especially upon the doctrine of internal improvements by the federal government—a doctrine which would appeal strongly to isolated Oregon. The vulnerable mark in the armor of the Oregon Democracy was immediately discovered. The inconsistency was shown of Democrats resolving that the building of a Pacific railroad by the general government was of paramount importance, while at the same time Democratic leaders and statesmen were declaring that the government had not the constitutional authority to make public improvements. Before the end of the year the Whigs were definitely urged by the Oregonian to organize at once in every county.[1] "The stupendous scheme of a grand Pacific railroad" was declared to be purely a Whig policy, destined to be the leading doctrine of the Whig party in Oregon. Dryer recognized in this the trump card of Whiggery in the Territory and he was determined that it should not be stolen by the presumptuous Durhamites.

On March 7th of the following year the movement toward actual organization was launched at a public meeting of the

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[1] Oregonian, November 4, 1853: "Heretofore the Whigs have not deemed it expedient to organize in opposition to this band of political marauders, supposing themselves to be in a hopeless minority. But the time has now come when further submission to the locofoco party would be highly criminal. Therefore we ask every Whig in Oregon to come out from among the Durham wolves. Let us take our position—unfurl our banners—proclaim our principles and charge manfully into the Philistine camp."

Whigs of Portland.[1] After attacking the abuses of Durham rule, they sent to their "brother Whigs throughout the Territory a full, frank and unalterable notice that henceforth and forever we stand on the platform of the Republican Whig party." They nominated a ticket to be voted upon at the approaching city election and made recommendation to the various counties to present full Whig tickets for county and territorial officers at the next June election. As a result of this meeting the Oregonian exultantly announced that the Whig party for the first time in Oregon stood out in bold relief, prepared and determined to do battle with a common enemy in a common cause; that the siren song of "Democracy" had been chanted for the last time, to Whig ears.

General Whig organization followed. It was not yet thorough and complete and was not distinctively Whig in every county. Washington county was a Whig stronghold and its convention, held May 6, 1854, issued a clear statement justifying organization.[2] The assembled delegates declared that they had tried in vain to induce all parties to lay aside prejudices of national parties; had sought to sustain good men for office regardless of politics, but that their overtures of peace had been met with bitter hostility. They had found themselves a proscribed class, treated like a conquered people. This convention, so far as the newspapers of the time show, made one of the very first references in Oregon to the opening struggle over the organization of those western territories, which struggle was big with the destinies of the nation. A rap was taken at Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska bill in the declaration: "We regard the several compromises made by Congress and acquiesced in by the people, as final, conclusive and binding." It is somewhat diverting to find these Whigs resolving that the federal offices of the Territory should be filled by citizens of Oregon! The present governor, Davis, was a Democrat and had been imported from Indiana.

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[1] Oregonian, March 11, 1854.
[2] Ibid., May 13, 1854.

While Whig organization was in progress another political movement had been making headway. It was to give rise to the Maine Law party. From the very first settlement there had been a strong sentiment in Oregon in favor of the prohibition of the sale of liquor. The Provisional legislature of 1844 enacted a law prohibiting the introduction of ardent spirits into Oregon,[1] the first prohibitory liquor law on the Pacific Coast.[2] The organic law as amended in the summer of 1845 gave the legislature the power to regulate the introduction and sale of intoxicants instead of the power to prohibit, and to this fact has been attributed, partly, the smallness of the majority of votes (203) cast for the amended law on July 26, 1845.[3] At the December session of the legislature a stringent prohibitory law was passed.[4] But it was generally asserted that the Hudson's Bay Company continued to import liquor for purposes of trade, while vigorous action was taken toward enforcing the law among the Americans. This caused dissatisfaction, and the result was that at the next annual session a license law was substituted, passed only over the emphatic veto of Governor Abernethy.

The passage of the prohibitory liquor law in the state of Maine in 1851 was reflected across the continent in Oregon within a few months. Considering the vast distances separating the coast from the East—the obstructive mountain ranges, the intervening deserts or the long sea route—it is a matter of surprise to note how quickly eastern movements or events became factors in the life and thought of Oregon in these early days. This is a good instance in point. In May, 1852, a temperance convention was held at Salem, attended by delegates from several counties.[5] The Convention declared for a Maine law for Oregon and a committee was appointed to confer with legislative candidates to get their attitude on the question "that the people may fully understand what they are supporting." The general interest in the subject is reflected in the numerous clippings from the eastern papers in the Oregon press during the year 1853, relative to prohibition in general and the working of the Maine law in particular. The Oregon Territory Temperance Association met at Salem in April, 1854, and resolved that the Maine law, modified so as not to conflict with the Territorial government, should be considered as the platform of the Territory. It was recommended that the friends of temperance meet at the various county seats on the first Tuesday in May to nominate candidates for the legislative assembly. Reports of the Marion and Yamhill county conventions show the movement to be strongly political.[1] The Yamhill resolutions declare that it *is* a political issue; that the interests of temperance are paramount to all ordinary political issues and that the participants pledge themselves to vote for no candidate for the legislature who is not known to be in favor of the Maine liquor law.

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[1] Oregon Archives, p. 44.

[2] Thornton, "History of the Provisional Government," p. 69.

[3] Ibid., p. 72.

[4] Oregon Archives, pp. 131, 132; Spectator, February 5, 1846.

[5] Statesman, May 18, 1852.

Thus in 1854, the first year in which the Democrats contend with organized opposition, that opposition does not present a united front, but is divided in two organizations. While the Maine law partisans had no unity with either of the old parties it was natural that the two minority parties in the Territory should tend to make common cause against the Durhamites. This they did in part, apparently without well concerted purpose. There was no uniformity of procedure. For example, in Marion county there was a Maine Law, but no Whig ticket and the vote shows that the Whigs supported the Maine Law candidates. That one of the latter receiving the highest vote, Orange Jacobs, was but 12 votes behind the low Democratic nominee. In Washington county there was a Whig but no Maine Law ticket. In Polk, where the relative strength of the Democrats and Maine Laws proved about 4 to 1, there were no Whig candidates, but in a few instances the candidates were denominated, "Maine Law-Whig", thus indicating coalition. Yamhill county had three distinct tickets in the field.[1] Bush stated the situation clearly from the Democratic standpoint.[2] He declared that Democracy was opposed by Whigs—openly, when any hope was entertained of succeeding under "that corrupt and often rebuked organization"; secretly, and under disguise of Independents, and Maine Law advocates where there was no prospect of victory under the odious flag of Federalism. Throughout the campaign Bush waged war on the Maine Law party; first, on principle, opposing the doctrine of prohibition; second, and more emphatically, on political grounds, stigmatizing the movement as a mere trick to aid the Whigs in defeating the Democrats.[3] The Marion County Democratic convention of May 6th soberly decreed that as Democrats they did not recognize the Maine liquor law as a legitimate political issue.

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[1] Oregonian, May 13, 1854.

The results of the election were generally favorable to the Democratic candidates but the latter appreciated the fact that their success had for the first time cost them a sharp struggle. The efficacy of organization on the part of the minority was demonstrated. As the Statesman averred, party lines were now distinctly and permanently drawn and there remained no back or neutral ground in Oregon politics.[4] Bush, in reviewing the election results, commended Clackamas, Linn, Polk and Yamhill counties as having acquitted themselves nobly in their struggle against all the isms of the day. On the other hand, Marion and Benton, heretofore the standard Democratic counties, had been afflicted with serious disaffections in the Democratic ranks, not resulting in total defeat, but giving much regret to the friends of Democracy everywhere. He exulted in the fact that no Maine Law candidate had been elected to the legislature and only eight Whigs.[1] The opposition was sufficient to impress the Durhamites with the necessity of forgetting past factions and differences among themselves and of making common cause against presumptuous opponents.[2]

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[1] The vote on the legislative tickets indicates the relative strength of the parties in Yamhill county:

A. J. Hembree, Democrat, 270.
Martin Olds, Democrat, 252.
A. G. Henry, Whig, 268.
Wm. Logan, Whig, 195.
J. H. D. Henderson, M. Law, 131.
G. W. Burnett, M. Law, 106.

[2] Statesman, May 16, 1854.

[3] Statesman, April 25 and May 2, 1854.

[4] Ibid., June 20, 1854.

The sky had not yet cleared after the stress of the June election when another cloud loomed big on the political horizon. It was the precursor of such a sudden, violent storm in Oregon politics as has not been seen before nor since. It broke with the violence of a hurricane, spent its fury and died away almost as quickly as it had come. It was the appearance in the Territory of the Know Nothing movement, which had appeared in the East in 1852, under the name of the American party. It was the reappearance on a larger scale, in American politics, of the attempts which had been made in eastern cities in 1835 and in 1843 to establish a "Native American" party. It took the form of a secret, oath-bound organization and avowed hostility to the political influence of foreigners in our government. Its design was to oppose the easy naturalization laws and demanded the selection of none but natives for office.[3] There were no peculiar conditions in Oregon sufficient to explain the furor raised by the introduction of the new issue. It has been suggested by Bancroft that it was largely an expression of the old antipathies toward the foreign element in the settlement of Oregon.[4] But these were rapidly passing away in the violence of national party strife. A study of the contemporary press does not suggest such potent local anti-foreign sentiment. The real explanation will become obvious in the story of the bitter struggle.

As early as 1852 Bush had attacked Native Americanism as but another exhibition of the spirit of the old Alien and Sedition laws.[5] But the issue was not joined until 1854 when the influence of the American party began to be manifest in the eastern elections. On July 25, 1854, the Statesman speaks of an extensive secret society flourishing in the East which was merely a Native American political party and which had already gotten itself into very bad odor. At this time Bush was in the East. In a letter to his paper dated June 19, and appearing August 8, for the first time in his regular correspondence he calls attention to the Know Nothings. He predicts for them a short career which will make plain the Alien and Sedition sympathies of 1854 Abolition Whiggery and publish the identity of that party with the old Hartford Convention Federalism. "So, as we can't help it, let this Native American dog (the meanest and most despicable of all curs) have its day." The Oregonian makes its first reference to the new party in August. It makes light of the evident anxiety and apprehensions of the Democrats and declares it "knows nothing" of the existence of such an organization in Oregon.[1] A little later, Dryer tacitly defends Know Nothingism as it gave him a new avenue of attack on the Durhamites. He declares that the idea that a native born American made free by the best blood of Revolutionary sires and educated under laws and institutions truly American, should presume to vote in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience, is a serious innovation to Oregon Democracy.[2] This early statement is significant as indicating the future attitude of the Whigs. They were inclined to look with charity upon any organization which threatened the power of the hated Durhamites.

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[1] Statesman, June 13 and June 27, 1854.

[2] Statesman, June 20, 1854—editorial on "Democratic Union."

[3] Johnston, "American Politics," p. 169.

[4] Bancroft, "History of Oregon," Vol. II., pp. 357, 358.

[5] Statesman, March 30, 1852.

The operations of the new organization being secret, its growth cannot be very satisfactorily traced. Before the end of the year there were numerous Know Nothing wigwams throughout the Territory and they were increasing steadily. The Know Nothings were enthusiastic and confident that they were going to sweep all before them.[3] There was held at

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[1] Oregonian, August 26, 1854.

[2] Oregonian, October 28 and November 4, 1854.

[3] Personal conversation with C. A. Reed, of Portland, a member of Salem Wigwam No. 4.

Portland on November 8, a district Democratic convention of Washington and Columbia counties, to make a nomination to fill a vacancy in the council of the legislature. The resolutions adopted are devoted almost entirely to the new heresy which is utterly condemned. The assembled Democrats declare uncompromising war against all their enemies, whether under the guise of "No Party party, Know Nothings, Native Americans or live Whigs," all of which are the natural allies of the Federal party. But the Durham leaders were clearly panic stricken. There was something insidious and baffling in the march of the movement. It was not only rapidly consolidating the opposition, but it was beginning to make inroads on their own forces. They stormed and denounced but it was like firing into the air. The stealthy enemy exposed no visible point of attack.

At this crisis in the fortunes of Oregon Democracy, there appeared in the Statesman of November 1, 1854, a sensational and far-reaching exposure. In the words of Bush, "A friend, who says that through idle curiosity he was induced to become a member of the 'Supreme Order of the Star Spangled Banner' or Know Nothings, has placed in our hands a full and complete exposure of the whole organization, embracing their form of initiation, oaths, obligations, signs, grips, tokens and pass words, the particulars of what has transpired at most of their meetings at this place and a list of the members here."[1] He characterizes the whole thing as the most ridiculous piece of bigotry, intolerance and stupidity grown persons were ever engaged in. He is pleased to find from the list that nearly all the members are Whigs—natural Know Nothings, who should have been admitted without initiation. He regrets, however, to find the names of a few Democrats. Two of the latter are ambitious for legislative honors but they are plainly told that their political days are numbered. In this issue Bush reveals enough to excite a furor and promises further developments in the future, including the publication of a list of membership. The next issue of the Statesman is almost wholly devoted to anti-Know Nothingism. The tempest stirred up by the exposure is evident. Bush was ordered to give the name of his informant.[1] He refused. He was told he would be held personally responsible.[2] In reply he hurled defiance at his threateners and continued his exposures week after week. The Salem Know Nothings changed their places of meeting, they did everything to escape the implacable Bush. But the disclosures continued until the whole history and secret operations of the order were exposed.[3]

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[1] The Statesman was published at Salem at this time.

This was a decided repulse to Americanism in Oregon. It was not that its operations were found to be heinous. Publicity robbed it of that subtle element of mystery which had been its principal asset. Furthermore, with the free use of the lash, the Durham leader headed off an incipient stampede. Bush was now cordially hated but thoroughly feared. His power was unquestioned. He ordered Democrats to stand clear of any connection with the "wolves in sheep's clothing" and emphasized his admonition with a covert threat: "Mark the prediction. There is not a man of prominence or influence belonging to the damning conspiracy in Oregon whose connection with it will not be known in less than six months. They are doomed men."[4] Democrats were inclined to take the imperious editor at his word. It was a venturesome man in Oregon politics at this period who would dare the displeasure of Bush. Many wavering ones, Democrats in particular, reconsidered the advisability of becoming associated with the proscribed Know Nothings.

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[1] Bush received his information through a printer employed on the Statesman named Beebe, who joined the Salem Wigwam as a spy.—Private letter, D. W. Craig to Geo. H. Himes, August 9, 1909.

[2] Personal conversation with Hon. Geo. H. Williams. For a week or more following the first exposure, the latter, armed, daily escorted Bush to his office past threatening Know Nothings.

[3] Statesman, November 28, December 12, 1854; January 2, June 16, June 23, 1855.

[4] Ibid., December 12, 1854. "What Democrat does not feel proud in the consciousness that he is pure and free from niggerism, Know Nothingism and all the other isms of the day? Who had not rather be a straight forward, consistent, fearless Democrat, than a shame-faced Know Nothing, skulking around from one garret to another in the darkness of the night."

But Bush and the Durhamites were not yet content. With the opening of the legislature a legislative coup was sprung which was to complete the work begun by the sensational exposure. With but eight members of the opposition in the Assembly, the Durham leaders, accustomed to almost implicit obedience, felt able to force through any measure which the political exigency demanded. The famous Viva Voce ballot law was drawn up and presented for enactment. It provided that thereafter the votes at all general elections should be given viva voce, or by ticket handed to the judges, in both cases to be cried in an audible voice in the presence and hearing of the voters. The management of the bill was entrusted to Delazon Smith, a future storm center in Oregon politics. Smith was absolutely candid as to the purpose of the measure.[1] By the exercise of such a censorship over the voters of Oregon, the Know Nothing movement, which he attacked with venom, was to be killed. With sublime effrontery he argued that the passage of the bill would mean a loss of six to eight hundred votes to the Whigs, whom the Democrats accused of being in alliance with the Know Nothings. In commenting upon the favorable action taken by the lower house, Bush was equally frank: "We hope next week to be able to congratulate the country, the friends of Daylight Deeds, upon the passage of this bill (this Know Nothing antidote) through the upper branch of the assembly." The hope was realized, but not before a fierce struggle. The display of such high-handed arrogance was too much even for a number of the Democratic members. Both the speaker of the house and the president of the council had the temerity to oppose the bill. The vote was 5 to 3 in the council, one Whig being absent, and 14 to 12 in the house.[2] The defense of the Viva Voce law, which the Statesman felt it necessary to make in the weeks which followed, suggests the storm of opposition it aroused. Volatile Dryer of the Oregonian became almost hysterical. "Do these political Ishmaelites suppose that freemen are such craven cowards that they dare not vote as they please for fear of those who ordained Delazon Smith the high priest of the party to whom voters are held accountable for the discharge of a blood-bought privilege?"[1] "No language is too severe in which to attack the political assassins who have assaulted the liberties of the people for personal ends."[2] And thus opened up the memorable campaign of 1855.

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[1] Statesman, December 19, 1854.

[2] Oregonian, December 30.

Statesman, December 19 and December 26.

The situation was peculiar and complex. On the one hand was Democracy, fearful for its supremacy, but all the more determined and aggressive—prepared for a desperate struggle. On the other hand, if the opposition was inchoate in 1854 it was more so in 1855. It now comprised Whigs, Americans or Know Nothings and prohibitionists or Maine Laws. There were no distinct lines of cleavage between them; neither were they in complete coalition, though the first two elements were practically in that relation.

In December, during the legislative session, there had been a meeting of the Whigs at Salem for the purpose of furthering the organization of their party. Prominently figuring in the proceedings were David Logan, Dr. E. H. Cleaveland, Mark A. Chinn, E. N. Cooke, C. A. Reed, T. J. Dryer and Amory Holbrook. A Territorial central committee was appointed, with power to call a convention and fix the proportion of representation. County committeemen were also appointed for the several counties of the Territory. A statement, drawn up by the president and secretary, Cleaveland and Chinn, respectively, urged the Whigs to effect organization in view of the coming campaign.[3] Accordingly Whig county conventions were held in the spring all over the Territory, to elect delegates to the Territorial Convention and to nominate county tickets.

With the Americans no general political organization was visible. Yet through their Wigwams they seemed to act with comparative concert and intelligence. In but one county, that of Washington, did they effect thorough organization and put out a distinctly American ticket. In 1856 and again in 1857 Washington county persisted in running American tickets though the movement was dead in Oregon after 1855.[1] Yet, strangely enough, perhaps because of the very absence of public organization, the Democratic fire was centered on Know Nothingism.

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[1] Oregonian, December 23.

[2] Ibid., December 30, 1854, January 6, January 13, 1855.

[3] Ibid., December 30, 1854.

Shortly after the election of 1854 the Territorial Temperance Association met at Albany, and its members resolved that though badly defeated they were far from discouraged and would re-enter the contest with renewed vigor.[2] The question of prohibition in Oregon continued to be agitated, efforts at organization were made and the temperance movement was still a factor to be reckoned with. Clatsop county held on May 1, a Temperance League Convention and invited attention to a complete ticket, "independent of the old corrupt and partially defunct Whig and Democratic parties." The movement was sufficiently formidable to excite Durhamite spleen. At the opening of the legislative session of '54-'55 a resolution was introduced inviting the ministers of the different denominations to open the deliberations each morning with prayer. A Durhamite member, Crandall of Marion, moved to amend by adding: "Except such ministers as are known to be in favor of the enactment of a Maine liquor law!" And the amendment was but narrowly defeated, by a vote of 14 to 11.[3]

In accordance with the call issued by the Territorial committee the Whigs met at Corvallis, April 18, to nominate a delegate to Congress.[4] Lane had been triumphantly re-nominated by the Democrats the week before at Salem. This was the first and last Territorial Whig convention to be held in Oregon.[5] On the first ballot, Ex-Governor Gaines received

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[1] Oregonian, April 19, 1856 and April 4, 1857.

[2] Statesman, June 20, 1854.

[3] Oregonian, December 16, 1854.

[4] Oregonian, April 21, 1855.

[5] The counties represented, with the number of delegates allowed, will give an idea as to Whig strength over the Territory: Umpqua 3, Lane 4, Marion 8, Benton 5, Polk 6, Yamhill 6, Washington 4, Clackamas 8, Multnomah 5, Linn 8. The Jackson delegation arrived late. Wasco, Columbia, Clatsop and Douglas counties were represented in the convention by proxies.

27 votes, Dryer 18, Chinn 11, A. G. Henry 8 and Holbrook 1; on the second Gaines 63, Chinn 3. The only platform adopted was the slogan, "Gen. Gaines against the world!" On the day following, the Americans met in convention at Albany and ratified the nomination of Gaines.[1] Indeed Bush boldly charged that Gaines was a Know Nothing; that the Know Nothings were in control of the Corvallis Whig convention, having previously settled the nomination in a private caucus.

Democratic courage and resolution had risen with the peril. In January, a Territorial Jackson club was organized at Salem as additional machinery with which to combat the contagious heresy. County Clubs were to be organized throughout the Territory. A central vigilance committee was appointed.[2] The constitution of the Yamhill county club provided for a vigilance committee to consist of one from each precinct to report from time to time on the state of the Democratic cause in the several precincts.[3] The Linn county nominating convention urged that each and every Democrat constitute a vigilance committee to rally the Democracy and prevent unsuspecting Democrats from being drawn into the "gull-traps of the midnight assassin."[4] This spirit of bitter antagonism toward the American party is similarly reflected in the various county Democratic conventions. The Territorial convention of April 11th passed strong resolutions of condemnation and aversion.[5]

Insisting that Gaines was a Know Nothing and was asking support as such, Bush appealed to the bona fide Whigs to vote for Lane and rebuke "the minions of Know Nothingism" with which they had nothing in common. He "points with pride" to a letter which he reproduces from John T. Crooks, an old line Whig who "washes his hands of the bastard party formed by a vile coalition between all the isms, the factions and fanatics in the Territory."[1] In reply Dryer addressed an editorial "To the Whigs." He denies that the issue between Gaines and Lane is Know Nothingism. If the American party had been strong enough it would have run an independent ticket. When the Americans overthrow the Democrats and stand out as a separate party—when they declare themselves on the various public issues such as slavery and the Maine Law, the Whigs of Oregon will have a duty to discharge. Until then, let the Whigs discard all affiliations with the Democratic dynasty. The political issues of the campaign were declared to be found in the Viva Voce law—the question of free Oregon or slave Oregon, which was the real Nebraska question—and internal improvements, including a Pacific Railroad and a Pacific Telegraph.[2]

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[1] Statesman, April 28. May 12, the Statesman speaks of the marriage of the two parties as having taken place at Corvallis, the infair being held at Albany.

[2] Ibid., January 16.

[3] Ibid., February 20.

[4] Statesman, April 10; Resolved, that the Oregon Statesmah and others who have labored to lay bare the cloven foot and deformity of this heinous midnight monster by giving the people a true and timely exposure of its sly and treasonable machinations, are really deserving of the fullest approbation of the Democrats of this Territory.

[5] Ibid., April 17.

While the Oregonian virtually championed the American cause, it could not speak for all Oregon Whigs. The Multnomah county Whig convention unequivocally disavowed connection with any other party, stoutly maintaining the integrity and principles of Whiggery. Its special aim was declared to be the nomination of Whig candidates to be supported by Whigs.[3] The Americans apparently took the Multnomah Whigs at their word as they put out a ticket of their own, designated as "republican ticket."[4] In Marion county the opposition put out a "Republican Reform ticket". It declared opposition to the "so-called Democracy, regardless of party," supported prohibition and endorsed Gaines."

A new factor was introduced into Oregon politics before the close of the campaign in the founding at Oregon City of the Oregon Argus, virtually successor to the Spectator which expired in March of this year. The editor was W. L. Adams or "Parson" Adams, he being a militant Campbellite preacher. Uncompromising, dogmatic, combative and eminently expressive, he was the Parson Brownlow of the West. Through the Argus he now began a career which was of vital influence in the making of Oregon's political history. In his prospectus[1] Adams had announced that the new journal would be devoted to the advocacy of great moral principles; in particular, to the cause of temperance. In party politics it was to be entirely neutral. But in the first issue, the editor, hitherto a Whig, announces that the Argus will take the American side in politics and advocate as the last and best hope of our distracted country, an abandonment of old party platforms.[2] Partisan strife in Oregon is deprecated. Gaines is supported as a clever, able and patriotic American citizen. Lane is attacked for inability, hypocrisy, for his pro-slavery schemes in Congress and his demagoguery. From the first the Argus puts the temperance question to the fore and sifted the legislative candidates according to their attitude toward the passage of a prohibitive liquor law.

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[1] Statesman, May 12.
[2] Oregonian, June 2.
[3] Oregonian, May 12.
[4] Ibid., May 26.

The campaign became personal and virulent beyond description. The Democrats attacked Gaines' Mexican War record and scorned him as a coward and lost to honor. The line of attack on Lane is suggested above. The two stumped the Territory together. In Polk county an altercation took place between them at their public meeting and they came to blows. As the June election approached the Statesman went into continued hysterics in its fulminations against the Know Nothings. Bush evidently looked upon the contest as one of life and death for Oregon Democracy. The opposition was sanguine of success.[3] During these strenuous weeks the Statesman was generously adorned with such picturesque epithets as "corrupt and wicked coalition, back alley patriots, skunks, hybrid horde, impious oaths, dens of darkness, dregs of fanaticism, midnight assassins, heinous night monster."

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[1] Published in Oregonian, October 21, 1854.

[2] Argus, April 21, 1855.

[3] "The Whigs and Know Nothings appear confident of Old Gaines' election. God preserve us from the infliction."—Bush to Deady, May 13.

The result of the election was as memorable as the campaign which preceded it. The Democratic victory was literally overwhelming. The Oregonian for once admitted complete defeat without pleading any compensations: "The election has astonished everybody, the Democrats as well as the Whigs. . . . It is now a fixed fact the people of Oregon are willing to be gulled by that talismanic word, 'Democracy'".[1] Lane's majority was 2149. Gaines carried but three counties in the Territory and those by a combined majority of only 79. The political complexion of the legislature was: house, Democrats 28; Whig-K. N., 2; council, Democrats 7, Whig-K. N., 2, one of whom was a hold over.[2] Bush was so intoxicated with success that immediately following the election a long editorial leader appeared in the Statesman championing Gen. Joseph Lane for the presidency of the United States in 1856.[3]

In commenting on the result Dryer found the real crux of the situation when he said that the so-called Democratic party was well organized and thoroughly drilled, while the Whigs were unorganized and never permitted drilling officers to govern or control them on any occasion.[4] Here is the secret of the stability of the Democratic regime in the Territorial period. Hundreds of Whigs rebelled at the attempt to force them into alliance with the Know Nothings, and either remained away from the polls or voted for Lane. The Oregonian suggested that the Whigs did not understand the true principles of the American party, but added that whether the object of that organization be justifiable or not, those principles had been prostrated, and to the advantage of Lane and the Democrats. "The time has come and now," declared Dryer, "for the Whigs in Oregon as a party, to plant themselves upon the great national Whig platform; to boldly, without deviating one jot or tittle from the true path, battle for Whig principles and doctrines." It is significant that before the election the opposition county nominating conventions were with four exceptions[1] denominated as Whig. In giving the returns, however, the tickets were headed "American" with the evident desire to shift the burden of defeat from the Whigs to the Know Nothings.

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[1] Oregonian, June 16.
[2] Statesman, June 16.
[3] Ibid., June 9.
[4] Oregonian, June 23.

As regards the action of the rank and file of Democracy the Oregonian stated the fact to be on record that scarcely without an exception, every member of the American party who had formerly acted with the Democrats, voted the Democratic ticket. Thus did the Viva Voce law accomplish its perfect work. In the face of the abuse and vilification heaped upon the Know Nothing movement it took more stamina and moral courage, than can now be well imagined, for a Democrat publicly to declare himself as one of the proscribed "minions". To do so meant political, if not social outlawry. For Bush never forgot and never forgave. In reviewing the situation in after years,[2] he said that against this secret, oath-bound association, the Viva Voce law interposed a powerful and effective barrier; that while the adjoining state of California, with a political sentiment as strongly Democratic as that of Oregon, was overrun by this proscriptive order, in Oregon it totally failed, unable to endure the broad light of day into which it was forced by the viva voce method of voting.

Within the two years ending with the election of 1855, we have found attempts made along three different lines to organize the opposition to Oregon Democracy. The Whigs had made a fair showing in the election of 1854 but were now thoroughly demoralized through their fusion with the Know Nothings. The latter had promised to sweep the Territory but within a few short months had been utterly routed and overthrown. The prohibitionists were cheerfully leading a forlorn hope. The Democrats, more strongly intrenched than ever, held the field undisputed. They were to continue to do so until the old issues were swallowed up in a new one, vital and all inclusive.

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[1] The "Republican" ticket of Multnomah; the "Republican Reform" of Marion; the "American" of Washington and the "Temperance League" ticket of Clatsop.

[2] Statesman, July 10, 1860.

CHAPTER V

THE DEMOCRATIC REGIME

The story of the organization of Oregon Democracy has been told—its early triumphs have been recounted. These victories made it plain that the Democratic party held the political mastery in the new Territory. The present purpose is to make a brief study of the manner and spirit in which this authority was exercised.

To review briefly, the election of Pierce in 1852, followed by the appointment of Oregon Democrats to the Territorial offices, had delighted the Durhamites. The latter now controlled all three departments of government. No cloud darkened their political horizon. But they had hardly ceased their self-congratulation before the sky became o'ercast. The failure of Judge Pratt, the Durham leader, to be confirmed by the Senate as Chief Justice, has been mentioned as the only discomfiture of the Democrats at this time. Geo. H. Williams was sent from Iowa to fill the position. While he was an uncompromising Democrat and had been appointed without his knowledge or consent,[1] the fact remained that we was an alien. He was holding an office which rightfully belonged, from the Oregon viewpoint, to an Oregonian. However, while Pratt's defeat caused temporary dissatisfaction, little complaint was raised.

But when after a very brief service as Associate Justice, Matthew P. Deady was displaced without just cause,[2] the Durhamites began to show their teeth Aside from the mere fact of his being an Oregon man, Deady was eminently qualified for judicial service and was very popular. As a result, the reception given his successor, O. B. McFadden, of Pennsylvania, was decidedly warm, though not in the usually accepted sense. The Statesman, Nov. 22, 1853, showed in a two column editorial the injustice of Deady's removal and openly criticized

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[1] Geo. H. Williams, in Oregon Historical Quarterly for March, 1901, p. 2.

[2] The only explanation given was that Deady, whose first name was Matthew, was serving under a commission which had been made out in favor of Mordecai P. Deady.

McFadden for accepting the judgeship after having arrived and having learned the circumstances. McFadden declined to take the broad hint to resign, whereupon Bush became abusive. Admitting that the interloper had been a good Democrat in the states, the vital fact remained: "In his selection no citizen of Oregon has been heard."[1] Meetings were held and letters for publication written protesting against the incumbency of McFadden. The latter, in holding the appointment and closing the way for Deady's re-instatement, was considered a political heretic and a traitor to Oregon Democracy.[2] So violent was the opposition that McFadden was transferred early in 1854 to the new Territory of Washington and Deady was reinstated.[3]

It has been stated that Lane returned to Oregon from Washington as governor in the spring of 1853; that he immediately resigned to run again for delegate, which left Secretary Geo. L. Curry in the governor's chair. This was satisfactory to Oregon Democrats as Curry was one of themselves. But here again President Pierce interfered. The result was the arrival in December of John W. Davis of Indiana, with a commission as governor. The Democracy of the new governor could certainly not be questioned as he had represented his party in Congress, had served as Speaker of the House, and had twice been Chairman of the Democratic National Convention. But the Durhamites failed to appreciate the compliment in the appointment of so distinguished a man, as Oregon's executive. To them, he was but another imported office-holder.

These affronts, suffered by the Democrats at the hands of their own Administration at Washington, had come in quick succession. They were as disconcerting as they were unexpected. But Durhamite defiance rose with fancied insults—the determination was rekindled to free the people of Oregon from National tutelage. In March, 1853, the Statesman had argued cautiously against statehood. By the end of the year the question bore a very different aspect from a Democratic viewpoint. Hence the legislature which met in December, three days after the arrival of Governor Davis, passed an act calling for a vote, at the forthcoming election, on the question of holding a constitutional convention. The cause of statehood was zealously espoused by Bush in the Statesman in the campaign of 1854. On the other hand the Oregonian as earnestly opposed it on financial grounds, and accused the Democrats of favoring a state government as a means of securing more offices.[1] The issue was lost by a majority of 869.[2]

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[1] Statesman, December 6, 1853.

[2] The animosity toward McFadden is vividly shown in the private correspondence between Nesmith and Deady, and Nesmith and Lane.

[3] Bancroft, Vol. II., p. 308.

But before the result was known, Bush announced that if the question had failed he would hoist the flag—"For a convention in 1855". "And we give the Whigs notice that we shall support this issue as a party measure."[3] Accordingly, a party issue it became. The next legislature had the presumption to pass a joint resolution calling for the appointment of a joint committee to draw up a state constitution.[4] But it receded from this radical position and passed an act like that of the previous year providing for a vote on the question of a constitutional convention. The Democratic Territorial Convention held in the following April, 1855, passed a strong resolution declaring that Oregon should assume the position of a sovereign state. A comparison of the vote on the question for the two years shows that Bush was largely successful in making statehood a Democratic issue. As a rule it was the heavily Democratic counties that gave the strongest support to a constitutional convention. The Whigs as a whole strongly opposed it, though one of their leaders, David Logan, supported the affirmative side of the question. This time, the majority in the negative was 413.

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[1] Oregonian, April 1, April 15, 1854.
[2] Statesman, July 11, 1854.
[3] Ibid., June 20, 1854.
[4] Oregonian, January 20, 1855.

Notwithstanding this defeat, at the next session of the legislature, that of '55-'56, the Democrats again passed an act calling for a vote on statehood—the third in three consecutive years. Such was their over-weening zeal that instead of having the vote taken at the regular June election, a special election in April was called. Presumably, such haste was occasioned by the determination to take no chances on the opportunity of helping settle the presidential contest in November. Each year the contest became more partisan and in 1856 it was violently so, and especially on the part of the Statesman. Alonzo Leland, editor of the Democratic Standard, was not en rapport with the powers ordained and saw fit to question the advisability of statehood. Whereupon his apostacy was heralded in the Statesman as the "Iscariotism of the Standard on the Convention Question."[1] In the spring of 1856 the Oregonian conducted a systematic and continuous campaign of education against the Democratic dogma of statehood. It declared that Oregon did not have population and wealth sufficient to maintain a state government, and opposed the movement as the scheme of a little coterie of politicians and would-be office holders. In 1854 the majority against a constitutional convention had been 869; in 1855 it had been 413. In 1856 it was 249. The imperious Durhamites were steadily nearing the goal.

In the meantime a change more apparent than real, had taken place in the management and personnel of the Democratic machine. While Judge Pratt had been the nominal leader of the Durhamites, the power of Bush, as exerted through the Statesman, was steadily increasing. Naturally, considering his part in the capital fight, Bush got practically no patronage in Oregon City[2] and in the middle of the year 1853 moved the Statesman plant to the new capital.[3] With Bush and the Statesman as a nucleus, Salem at once became the recognized headquarters and rendezvous of a little coterie of Democratic politicians which held Oregon in the palm of its hand. The popular, or often unpopular, designation of this junto was the "Salem Clique", or Cli-que, as called by an illiterate though pugnacious rural politician.

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[1] Statesman, April 22, 1856.

[2] "I get very little patronage in Oregon City. I will give a premium on the best essay on prejudice. But Oregon City is not all of Oregon."—Bush to Deady, April 17, 1851.

[3] "The Statesman has been removed to Salem. It left last Sunday. Rumor says the clergymen at Oregon City gave out the hymn—

'Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse removed.' "—Oregonian, June 18, 1853.

In 1855 Judge Pratt aspired to succeed General Lane as Oregon's delegate to Congress, and made an active campaign for the nomination. A sharp struggle ensued, short, but very decisive. Behind Lane were the Salem Clique and the popular adulation; behind Pratt, a few non-machine Democrats and the Standard. The rivalry became bitter, the Standard opposing Lane and the Statesman attacking Pratt with malevolence, and all to the edification of the Whigs. In the convention Lane received 53 votes, Pratt but 6.[1] The Durham leader had been effectually dethroned. The supremacy of Lane with the people was signally manifested. But behind it all was Bush, absolutely master of the situation. Lane, with the bonhomie—the smooth-tongued and affable—stood before the people as the successful, idolized leader. But the real dictator of the Oregon Democracy was the man behind the Statesman—wary, inflexible, ruthless. From this time the sobriquet, "Durhamites", as denoting the Democratic ring, gave way to that of "Salem Clique" or merely "the Clique."

A complete story of the capricious, arrogant rule in Oregon under the regime of the Salem Clique would form one of the most picturesque chapters in the political history of the West. A few instances will suffice to indicate the nature of that regime. Governor Davis was made plainly to feel by his captious fellow Democrats, soon after his arrival in Oregon, that he was persona non grata. There was no cordiality between them. He was made the butt of ridicule by certain of the Clique noted for coarse wit and sharp tongue.[2] Though a life-long Democrat, the coercive, domineering attitude of his political confreres in Oregon was a revelation to him. Plainly, he did not fit into the scheme of Oregon Democracy. The situation became unbearable to him, and after serving nine months, he resigned in August, 1854. Thereupon the Democrats asked the privilege of banqueting him. He declined the honor in a public letter in which he took the occasion to suggest a few pertinent facts and to offer a little significant advice.[1] Evidently, the Democrats had insisted that he become actively partisan in the canvass for statehood, as he defended himself for not becoming so, on the ground that his position would not allow it. He told his political compatriots plainly that they should abandon personal and sectional considerations and base their actions on principles. He reminded them that "our opponents are entitled to their opinions equally with ourselves"—mild heresy according to Salem Clique standards. The situation was aptly summed up by Dryer in the Oregonian.[2] "Gov. Davis was a foreigner. . . . He had neither driven his team across the plains nor been to the mines. Besides, if treated decently at first he might become popular in Oregon. . . We think he has fairly revenged himself."

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[1] "Pratt's sun of Austerlitz has gone down amid the gloom of Waterloo . . No man was ever let down so fast."—Nesmith to Deady, April, 1855.

[2] Conversation with Hon. Geo. H. Williams.

Every event or crisis in the Territory was viewed by the Clique at the focus of the narrowest partisanship. This is well illustrated by their attitude concerning the prosecution of the Indian war in Southern Oregon in 1855-6. During the summer of 1855 trouble had been plainly brewing in the south. Depredations and murders were committed by the Indians, followed by a pretty general outbreak. Gov. Curry undertook prompt and vigorous measures toward quelling the disturbance. The Clique frowned upon such undue haste and hampered the governor by attacks and bickerings.[3] Sufficient time should be taken to place the operations on a thorough Democratic basis. "Where would they lead us?" demanded Dryer in the Oregonian. "In any other country but Oregon this war would have a tendency to unite men in a common cause."[1] In the enrollment of volunteer companies, among the commissioned officers a few Whigs and Know Nothings had received appointments, largely as surgeons. This was the occasion of a storm of opposition headed by Bush. To think that despised Know Nothings, recently so thoroughly repudiated by the people, should come into position by appointment—and that by a Democratic governor! It was preposterous, incredible.[2] The Statesman went into one continued paroxysm of frenzy, equal to that which had affected it a few months previous in the anti-Know Nothing campaign. The intractable Bush did not hesitate to threaten the governor: "Mark these words: henceforth in Oregon it is the doctrine of the Democratic party that public offices of no kind shall be conferred upon members of the Know Nothing order or its sympathizers and upholders. And no man who violates that doctrine will be sustained by the Democracy."

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[1] The Oregonian, August 5, 1854.

[2] The Oregonian, August 5, 1854.

[3] "Like you, I'm disgusted with this d—— Injun excitement. Curry ought to be held in. D—— a man who has no judgment."—Bush to Deady. October 22, 1855.

A petition was gotten up and copies sent to the faithful throughout the Territory asking that as many signers as possible be secured and that it be forwarded to Gov. Curry at once—"by first mail if can be". The petition read: "To His Excellency: The undersigned, Democratic and anti-Know Nothing voters of Oregon, earnestly petition your excellency to cause to be displaced all members of the Know Nothing party or supporters of that party holding public station, directly or indirectly under you, and that their places be filled by competent Democrats." And all this hue and cry from the mere fact that a half dozen insignificant offices were held by those other than Democrats! It was nothing to the Clique that the appointees were capable and that the need was urgent. This was apparently an issue of far greater import to them than the protection of life in Southern Oregon and the success of the troops in restoring order. The Oregonian condemned in strongest terms the attempt to introduce party politics into that branch of

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[1] Oregonian, November 17, 1855.

[2] Statesman, November 3 and November 10.

THE SALEM CLIQUE

ASAHEL BUSH
JAS. W. NESMITH

R. P. BOISE

LAFAYETTE GROVER
BENJ. F. HARDING

the service from which it had ever been excluded by true patriotism.[1] The Argus referred to the petition as "the climax of villainy" and quoted the Democratic Standard as saying "We hesitate not to distinctly declare that we have no sympathy for and partake not in the spirit that would beget such a petition."[2] But the Clique were not to be denied their peremptory demands. The following session of the legislature reorganized the military department, removing from the governor the power of appointment of officers and substituting election by the legislature. This proved an easy solution. The offensive officers were summarily decapitated and replaced by "competent Democrats."[3] The war was placed on a partisan Democratic basis and the members of the Clique were appeased.

To all outward appearances the utmost harmony existed at this time between Lane and the Democratic Junto who ruled Oregon. But the private correspondence of members of the latter show that as early as 1855 Lane was under the displeasure of the Clique. Hailed as the "Marion of the Mexican war", the "Cincinnatus of Indiana", and heralded as a hero in the role of Indian fighter in Oregon, Lane's popularity was unbounded.[4] This popularity was political capital for the party manipulators and viewed by them as a very valuable asset. As for Lane himself, they were inclined to patronize him among themselves as a "thick skulled old humbug,"[5] to be cultivated as long as he could be used, especially at Washington where his influence was recognized. In 1855 General Joel Palmer, superintendent of Indian affairs in Oregon, was marked by the Democratic leaders for overthrow, and his removal was demanded of Lane. In the accusations against Palmer, sent to Washington by the Legislature, it was charged that "While representing himself as a sound national Democrat, he had perfidiously joined the Know Nothings, binding himself with oaths to that dark and hellish secret political order."[1] But General Palmer and Lane were good friends and the latter delayed the political execution. In another instance, instead of securing a certain appointment for a prominent Oregon Democrat, as requested by the Clique, Lane had an Indiana friend appointed. Such audacity was amazing and the political oligarchs gnashed their teeth in rage, among themselves. One member advised "a call of the Cli-que to throw him (Lane) overboard."[2] A temporary rapprochement was effected but it was evident that serious trouble was ahead for Lane at the hands of the restive Junto.

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[1] Oregonian, December 8, 1855.

[2] Argus, November 10, 1855.

[3] See Oregonian, February 9, 1856.

[4] Lane had done effective service against the Southern Oregon Indians in 1851 and again in 1853.

[5] Nesmith to Deady, September 14, 1855.

The rule of Bush and the Clique was absolute and imperious. They laid the plans and issued the orders It was for the rank and file to obey. And obedience must be unquestioning. If a Democrat forgot this, he must be disciplined. If he persisted in his temerity the wrath of the Statesman was turned upon him and he was destroyed politically. Bush, absolutely uncompromising, took offense easily and the fear of his terrible invective was potent in maintaining party discipline. Jas. F. Gazley, Democratic member of the legislature of '54-'55 from Douglas county, had the hardihood to oppose the Viva Voce law. Misrepresentation and vilification at the hands of Bush followed. "Little did I suspect", complained Gazley, "that while boldly vindicating principles which I ever have honestly maintained, that clouds of indignation were gathering so gloomily around the political horizon, too soon, alas, to burst upon my unlucky head."[3]

It became the general rule of Democratic nominating conventions to pledge the delegates to support the candidates and to avow loyalty to them, before those candidates were nominated.[4] Good Democrats never questioned such procedure. The manner in which a man obeyed orders from headquarters was the criterion of his Democracy. "Pizurrinctums" was an epithet which came into frequent use by Bush in the Statesman in applying the party lash. It originated in Maine and was used to describe those Democrats who were not "reliable."[1]

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[1] Quoted by Bancroft, Vol. II., p. 399.

[2] Nesmith to Deady, September 14.

[3] In Oregonian, January 13, 1855.

[4] John Minto in Oregon Historical Quarterly for June, 1908, p. 144.

It must not be supposed that this autocratic, coercive authority was submitted to with universal equanimity. There was murmuring and threatened revolt from time to time, but until 1857-8 the authority of Bush was sufficient to overawe opposition.[2] An indication of the restiveness of Democrats under the lash of the Salem Clique is found in the following resolution adopted by the Lane County Democratic convention in May, 1856: "Resolved, That we will not make any party issues on men but will stand upon principles, and we consider they who oppose the Democratic party because they happen not to like Bush, Delazon Smith, or other members thereof, as disorganizers and enemies of Democratic principles."[3] The Washington County convention pointed out as the elements of disruption in the party, first "The too dictatorial mandates of a self-constituted leadership"; second, the too little regard for the binding effect of party measures, principles and nominations on political action.[4] Both tendencies were most severely condemned. The Clatsop County Democrats were more charitable and cheerful, extending the olive branch to their prodigal brethren with words which were unctious with forgiving grace: "We earnestly invite every Democrat who has been lured from his party by corrupt and designing factionists, to come up out of Babylon—shake off the vile fetters which have bound him, wash his hands of corruption, abjure his fanaticism, renew his allegiance to the party, and stand forth in the bright sunshine of God, a man and a Democrat."

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[1] Statesman, April 21, 1855.

[2] "They (Oregon Democrats) fear him as the fawning hound fears his master and they dare not disobey his orders. They curse him among the populace, but support and sustain him out of sheer cowardice."—Oregonian, December 29, 1885.

[3] Statesman, May 27, 1856.

[4] Statesman, June 10, 1856.

From certain points of view, the absolute dominance of Democracy in Territorial Oregon is little short of amazing. It is true that Oregon looked upon such illustrious Democrats as Jefferson, Benton, Linn and Polk as having been the true friends of the great Northwest. The long hoped for territorial organization had come at the hands of a Democratic administration. But the fact remained that National Democracy was unalterably opposed in theory and practice to the one great principle, to the support of which Oregon was necessarily committed. And that was the principle of internal improvements by the Federal government. The new and distant Territory was practically dependent upon national aid for the furtherance of various projects which were linked inseparably with her development. Standing out above all of these, the demand for a Pacific railroad furnishes an excellent example. There was unanimity in the demand. With fatuous inconsistency Oregon Democrats declared it to be the duty of the General Government to support the great project, using all means "not inconsistent with the Constitution."[1] Dryer very pertinently asked how men could oppose that which they were in favor of and support that which they opposed and be consistent and honest.[2] But the dilemma offered no appreciable difficulties to Oregon Democrats. They continued to swell the majorities of the party whose great distinguishing mark from the Whigs was its opposition to the policy which its Oregon members demanded. A more striking illustration could scarcely be found in all American politics of obdurate adherence to, and the blind infatuation of, party allegiance.

In the first place, the majority of the people of Oregon had come from those western strongholds of the new, aggressive Democracy, embodied by Jackson, and when party alignment was made in Oregon this fact was emphasized. To these westerners, Democracy was one and the same, whether found in Missouri, Illinois or Oregon. And in the days when a man's politics were largely hereditary it is not so strange that the old allegiance was maintained, especially when all the local circumstances are taken into consideration. The fact that it was the majority party further strengthened the Oregon Democracy. The desire to be on the winning side with a chance in the distribution of the loaves and fishes, caused not a few to "pick up their Democracy on the way over the Rockies."

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[1] Report of Democratic Territorial Convention in Statesman, April 21, 1857.

[2] Oregonian, October 7, 1854.

Having a good working majority to begin with, the shrewd Democratic leaders were able by various means, some of which have been indicated, to maintain it. The extreme partisanship of the Democrats made them the more easily manageable. They could be handled more effectively in party organization than could the Whigs, who were more impatient of control.[1] A clarion call for loyalty to the eternal and glorious principles of Democracy was sufficient to obscure real issues and rally the faithful against the "minions of Whiggery." First and last, "Democracy" was the paramount issue. This attitude is illustrated by the declaration of a delegate in a Democratic convention, enthusiastically received by those assembled: "The paramount duty of Democrats now is to stick together, for I never expect to see anything good come outside of the Democratic party."[2]

In the last resort, one is forced to return to the conclusion that the controlling force in the situation was found in the coercive influence of the Oregon Statesman and in the personality of its editor, Asahel Bush. The paper and the man were supplementary to each other. The result was a political power well-nigh irresistible. As the official Democratic organ of the Territory, the Statesman had a natural prestige to begin with. Its circulation was much greater than that of the Oregonian and Argus, which were taken largely by the same people. It went into the great majority of the Democratic homes of Oregon. And into these homes there rarely came an opposing paper to challenge its authority, as it was counted almost political heresy to give countenance to a journal of an antagonistic party.[1] In the days when reading material was limited, especially in isolated Oregon, the family newspaper was depended upon as the source of general enlightenment, entertainment and instruction. More or less unconsciously its readers assumed for it the standard of infallibility. This fact rendered its political dictums unquestioned and its political authority well-nigh absolute. By befogging the real issues, by denouncing the opposition, by threatening and abusing the recalcitrant, by encouraging the reliable by fulsome praise and with hopes of reward and last by a constant and adroit use of the talisman, "Democracy," the Statesman exerted a degree of political authority which at the present time can scarcely be appreciated.

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[1] Personal conversation with Judge Williams.

[2] Cited by T. W. Davenport in Oregon Historical Quarterly for September, 1908, p. 229.

But while it was through the medium of the Statesman that the exercise of so great power was possible, the latter is not fully accounted for until the personality of Bush, which has already been suggested, is taken into consideration. In speaking of the autocratic editor, a keen, accurate observer of the political situation of that period, says his talent for control was of a high order, as suited to his party and the time. A ready and trenchant writer, with an active and vigorous temperament, a taste and capacity for minute inquiry, a thorough knowledge of the inclinations and idiosyncrasies of his political brethren, possessed of a vinegary sort of wit, and a humor bitter or sweet according to destination, he was the most influential and feared of any man in the Territory.[2] Benevolent despotism in Oregon politics could hardly have been achieved with a mediocre man as editor of the Statesman. But given the latter, managed by a man whose dominant personality, whose constructive and organizing ability were such as to be today the subject of both wonder and admiration, the Democratic regime in Oregon was made possible.

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[1] Conversation with Judge Williams and Geo. H. Himes.

[2] Davenport, p. 244.

CHAPTER VI

THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL IN OREGON POLITICS

The anti-Negro sentiment in Oregon was emphatic. The anti-slavery provision of the Ordinance of 1787 had been incorporated in the articles of compact of the Provisional Government. It had been inserted in the organic act by which Oregon became a Territory of the United States. In 1853 Judge Williams[1] awarded freedom to certain Negroes held as slaves on the ground that slavery did not and could not exist in Oregon. The decision seemed obvious and was accepted as final. Likewise, the first session of the legislature of the Provisional Government had passed an act prohibiting the presence of free Negroes within the field of its jurisdiction. The measure was re-enacted by the first Territorial legislature. It was only by a special act of the legislature of '52-'53 that George Washington, a colored man of high standing, was allowed to reside in the Territory.[2] Clearly, as a matter of policy, the people of Oregon repudiated most emphatically all relations with the Negro, bond or free. Far separated from the arena of sectional strife, they had no thought of interfering with the Negro question or of allowing it to interfere with them. They were very willing, indeed, to "let slavery alone."

This was the situation in distant Oregon up to the year 1854. Then, as by the hand of a magician, the scene was suddenly changed. The sense of security against the black evil was succeeded by uncertainty, if not positive alarm. Agitation succeeded equanimity. Political reorganization began at once to meet new and threatening conditions. Within a few short years, the slavery question was the paramount issue in the Territory and Oregon was shaken with the violence of conflict. Such was the result, directly and indirectly, of the passage by Congress, May 22, 1854, of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which violated the spirit of the Ordinance of 1787, repealed the Missouri Compromise and, through the fiction of popular sovereignty, threw open the territories to slavery. No better example can be had of the far-reaching consequence of the recognition of the Kansas-Nebraska principle and of the promulgation of doctrines which grew out of it. Oregon, far out on the North Pacific, with conditions and interests wholly foreign to those within the arena of conflict, is forced, against her will, to become embroiled in the bitter contest. This, in the face of the imperious demand of the South addressed to the North—"Why can't you let slavery alone?" The far-reaching effects of the injection of this foreign issue into Oregon politics, it will be the purpose of this and succeeding chapters to show.

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[1] Judge Williams, in Oregon Historical Quarterly for March, 1901, pp. 5, 6. Nathaniel Ford, of Polk County, had brought with him from Missouri in 1845 as slaves, a man named Robbin and family, and held them in servitude in Oregon. Robbin sued for their liberty by writ of habeas corpus.

[2] See Statesman, December 18, 1852. A petition for the special enactment, with 113 names subscribed, was presented to the legislature. Washington, an early pioneer, was a man of means and had generously assisted needy immigrants.

The same day on which the Washington County Whig convention passed a resolution condemning the policy of the proposed Kansas-Nebraska measure, the regular Democratic view was voiced by the Yamhill County Democratic convention. The delegates to the latter announced that they had not read with indifference the debates in the United States Senate on the subject of popular sovereignty in the territories, and expressed the hope that the time had fully arrived when the citizens of a territory were no longer to be considered the property of the United States.[1] How apt an expression of the old desire for local independence—of hostility to all superimposed authority! In the same spirit, the Democratic Territorial convention of the following year hailed the enactment "which restored to the people of the territories, their rights as American citizens."[2] The principle of popular sovereignty had a different and far greater significance to most Oregon Democrats, than its mere relation to the slavery question. They pushed the doctrine to its logical conclusion at once. To them it meant the fulfillment of their hopes and demands for complete self-government; for election of all Territorial officers. It meant the end of imported officials.

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[1] Statesman, May 23, 1854.
[2] Statesman, April 17, 1855.

The Democratic papers were prompt to defend the new doctrine.[1] "The clamor of repeal may be raised," said Bush, "but the step is taken and Democracy never recedes."[2] Yet he found it advisable to conciliate and reassure the skeptical. In an editorial, "The Nebraska Bill a Measure for African Freedom," he argued ingeniously that the measure would have no tendency to implant slavery in the new territories, from which it was excluded by nature; that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise would mollify the South, which, being no longer on the defensive, would inaugurate a policy of gradual emancipation.[3] Such was the vividness of Democratic imagination in attempting to justify the party policy in a way to satisfy free state Democrats.

The reflection of the great contest at Washington in the spring of 1854 is clearly found in the Oregon legislature of '54-'55. The Democratic leader, Delazon Smith, introduced a long series of resolutions endorsing Pierce and the acts of the National Administration and especially the Kansas-Nebraska bill. He boldly affirmed that its passage was a virtual repeal of that part of Oregon's organic law which declared that slavery should never exist in Oregon. The house discussed these resolutions day after day with warmth and vigor, finally passing them, but the council offered amendments which it refused to accept. Prominent in opposing the Democratic position was Dr. A. G. Henry, of Yamhill County, the leading Whig member of the legislature. He introduced counter resolutions attacking the Kansas-Nebraska bill and his speech supporting them was remarkable, both for its accurate and vivid historical presentation of slavery legislation in the United States and for clear and cogent reasoning therefrom.[4] The marked ability of even the average member of legislative assemblies in those days to discuss the great political problems before the country, is indeed striking and a continual source of surprise and admiration. Every man was a politician. The issues were vital and were studied until all were posted on them.[1]

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[1] "The Statesman and Standard are feeling their way into a support of the Kansas-Nebraska bill. The editors and assistants expect, no doubt, to get situations as Negro drivers. New England apostates and former free soilers, make first-rate overseers, so far as whipping Negroes is concerned."—Oregonian, July 22, 1854.

[2] Statesman, August 15, 1854.

[3] Ibid., August 22.

[4] Reproduced in the Oregonian, February 17, 1855.

The attempt of the leaders of the Democratic party in Oregon to create sentiment in favor of the Kansas-Nebraska doctrine was met with sturdy opposition. For example, the Yamhill County Whig convention held in April, 1855, did "utterly and unequivocally repudiate and condemn the Nebraska-Kansas bill as a wanton and unnecessary renewal of the slavery agitation." It denounced the principle of popular sovereignty and declared the right and duty of Congress to exercise the power of sovereignty in the Territories.[2] The Oregon Whigs belonged to the northern wing of the party and could be counted upon to resist pro-slavery aggression. Many, however, who felt most deeply upon the subject, did not consider the old and rapidly disintegrating party as the proper and adequate avenue of attack against slaveocracy. Accordingly, on June 27, 1855, an anti-slavery convention was held at Albany, the first to take place in Oregon Territory. Thirty-nine men were present and signed their names to the records of the historic meeting, thus becoming in a way the charter members of the organized movement against slavery aggression in the Far Northwest.[3] The intense feeling which had been aroused in the distant northern territory within one year after the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, is well suggested by the resolutions passed by these thirty-nine pioneers in the cause of freedom. They resolved that the whole system of legislation by Congress since and including 1850 was a flagrant outrage on the civilization of the age and disgraceful to the patriotism and religion of the whole country; that the artfulness and treachery displayed in the aggressiveness of the slave power "should awaken a most jealous watchfulness in regard to its movements in this direction, as we know not at what moment, by some artful ruse, it may be precipitated upon our Territory." The holding of county meetings throughout the Territory was encouraged for the purpose of arousing public sentiment against the growing evil of slavery and for securing the election of men to office who could be relied upon to oppose its encroachments. The support of the anti-slavery newspapers in Oregon was urged.

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[1] Conversation with Judge Williams.

[2] Oregonian, April 21, 1855.

[3] See Oregonian, July 7, for names of those attending.

Likewise, the intense feeling on the other side of the question is evidenced in the comment made on this convention. Delazon Smith, the "Lion of Linn," was an eye witness of the proceedings and reported with satisfaction to the Statesman that only one of the participators was ever suspected of being a Democrat.[1] He said the issue in 1854 was the Maine Law, in 1855 Know Nothingism, and now it was to be Free Soilism --and that the champions were the same in each case. He became sarcastic on the "artful ruse" expression, declaring that not one man in twenty, permanently residing in Oregon, wished to see it a slave state. The attitude of Bush was picturesquely characteristic. He refused to publish the proceedings of the meeting which he referred to as "a collection of old grannies." "It is decidedly icy in these nigger-struck dames to ask the Statesman to publish their stale fanaticism. . . If anything could make the people of Oregon desire slavery, it would be the agitation of the subject by such fanatics as these."[2]

The first Oregon counterpart of the action of Eastern anti-Nebraska men in assuming the name of "Republican party," early in 1856, is found in Jackson County in May of the same year. It was a nominating convention of "the Republicans of Jackson county" and was held at Lindley's school house, in Eden precinct. H. Colver addressed the meeting, "showing the aims, object and principles of the Republican movement."[3] After an expression that old dividing issues had passed away or had now faded into insignificance before the one great question, the meeting adopted a ringing platform. It declared freedom to be national, slavery sectional; that the power of the Federal Government should be exerted to prohibit slavery in every territory of the United States. However, in the next sentence, it was affirmed that the people are the rightful source of all political power and that officers, as far as practicable, should be chosen by a direct vote of the people. This is suggestive of what a strong appeal one phase of the doctrine of popular sovereignty made to Oregonians generally. It is rather suggestive that the first Republican meeting in Oregon was held in the southern part of the Territory where Southern sentiment was most pronounced.

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[1] Statesman, July [illegible], 1855.

[2] Ibid.

[3] See Oregon Argus, June 7, for report of proceedings.

On the 20th of August, following, "a number of the friends of the Republican cause" met at Albany to inaugurate Republican organization in the Territory.[1] Practically all those whose names figure in the report of this meeting were among the thirty-nine members of the Free Soil convention of the previous year. The expediency of immediate organization was affirmed. The resolutions heartily approved of the principles set forth by the Philadelphia National convention, which had taken place in June, a month after the date of the Jackson County meeting. The nomination of Fremont and Dayton was hailed with enthusiasm. Steps toward immediate organization were taken. The holding of primary and county meetings was urged. A committee was appointed to correspond with the friends of the Republican cause throughout the Territory to consider the propriety of calling a Territorial convention. Before adjourning, the manifesto was made that "We fling our banner to the breeze, inscribed—'Free Speech, Free Labor, a Free Press, a Free State and Fremont.'"

Precinct and county Republican conventions followed in the fall of 1856. The Oregonian of December 6th announced that almost every county in Oregon had held a Republican convention and adopted a platform. These platforms, agreeing on the great question at issue, still differ sufficiently to render them interesting subjects for study. The Yamhill County convention of November 15th, gave the Democrats a significant reminder, in endorsing the wisdom of the act of Congress organizing the Territory, which, "by applying the principle incorporated by Thos. Jefferson in the Ordinance of 1787, prohibits slavery in our Territory." The Yamhill Republicans declared with more grandiloquence than precision that they were for free Territories and free States, for free farms and free labor, free society and free school, free thought and free discussion, free speech and free press, free religion and free votes—for freemen, Fremont and freedom. However, the politic Dr. McBride introduced a special resolution, which was adopted, expressing opposition to interference in any way with slavery in those states where it already existed. The Clackamas convention of November 29th prefaced its resolutions with the "whereas," that the old Whig party was dead, the Know Nothing party was dying and the falsely called Democratic party ought to be dead and buried. It disavowed any intention of the Republicans to interfere with slavery in the states, but declared the General Government bound from principle and policy to guarantee freedom to all the Territories. Figuring prominently in this incipient Republican organization in the Territory were not a few whose names were to be writ large in the future annals of the state.

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[1] Argus, September 6, 1856; Oregonian, September 13.

The attitude of the three leading papers of the Territory toward the new Republican party is interesting and significant. That of the Statesman was exactly what might be expected. In an editorial, "A Black Republican Party in Oregon—the Face for Next Year,"[1] Bush shows the past opposition to Oregon Democracy to have been one and the same, whether fighting under the banner of Law and Order, No Party, People's Party, Whig, Temperance or Know Nothing; that the next front to be presented by this mongrel opposition was to be "Black Republican — Disunion, . . . the true face of these fanatics."

A life-long and violent Whig, Editor Dryer of the Oregonian, found himself in a rather embarrassing position during the presidential campaign of 1856. For while Oregon had no voice in presidential elections the attitude of the Territorial editors during the campaigns was hardly less aggressive on that account. The wreck of the Whig party which met at Baltimore, September 17, 1856, ratified the Know Nothing nominations of Fillmore and Donelson, made at Philadelphia, February 22, but did not adopt the American party platform.[1] Early in the campaign Dryer entered the nominations of all the parties at the head of his editorial page, headed by the names of Fillmore and Donelson in big, black display type. Before the end of the campaign he changed the latter to the modest type in which the others appeared. Though opposing Buchanan in a general way he did not come out for either Fillmore or Fremont, though he published re-print articles favorable to both and occasionally unfavorable. His attitude was that of satisfaction with either, if only the defeat of Buchanan could be secured, who stood on the Cincinnati platform which endorsed the substitution of squatter sovereignty for the Missouri Compromise. But Dryer endorsed Buchanan's inaugural address as good old Whig doctrine and good enough for him if carried out.[2] Thus is seen the uncertain, purposeless attitude of Dryer who found himself a man without a party.

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[1] Statesman, September 19, 1856.

So steadfast was Dryer to his old Whig allegiance, that he viewed askance the organization of the new party in Oregon. In his view its principles were so sufficiently maintained by the Whigs as to preclude the necessity of a new organization. He resented freely the idea that Republicanism was a new doctrine and likewise resented the apparent efforts of the supporters of the new movement to declare and maintain a monopoly in Republican principles.[3] His attitude was frankly critical and semi-hostile.

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[1] Johnston's "American Politics," p. 176.

[2] Oregonian, April 11, 1857.

[3] "We have always supposed we were a Republican, we think so still. . . . If our republicanism don't suit you gentlemen, your republicanism won't suit us, and we shall not endorse it."—Oregonian, November 8, 1856.

On the other hand the Argus strongly supported the Republican organization. Its declaration was made November 1, 1856. In September a movement had been launched in Linn County for the raising of capital in the Territory for establishing a Republican paper.[1] But when Adams committed the Argus to the cause, the effort to start a new paper was given up and the Argus was recognized as the official Republican organ. Adams declared the cardinal doctrines of the Oregon Republican party to be those demanding a free Territory and a Pacific railroad.[2]

While the Oregonian did not ally itself with the Republican movement, by 1856 it took up the issue definitely against slavery. It had had as little sympathy with abolitionism as had the Statesman. In 1853 it contained frequent insinuations against Mrs. Stowe and "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and abolitionists in general. But it became aroused by the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill and by the series of events which followed in its train. When Delazon Smith's resolutions endorsing the bill were before the legislature of '54-'55, R. J. Ladd of Umpqua county moved to strike out the 5th resolution which stated that the physical conditions in Oregon were unpropitious for the introduction of slavery and would operate to keep it out of the Territory. He declared that he did not want to discourage slave holders coming to Oregon with their property if they saw fit. It was the voice of a minority. But so completely was the slave power getting control of the Democratic party of the United States and so subservient were the rank and file to party action and decrees, that it was not a wild and unreasonable fear on the part of those who saw in this minority the possibility of the encroachment of slavery in Oregon. It was this fear which gave zest to Republican organization. It was this fear that led the conservative Dryer to change his policy of "letting slavery alone."

The progress of the civil strife in Kansas, in which the Administration had actively interfered in behalf of the pro-slavery party, was followed anxiously by Oregonians for whom it had peculiar significance. Sumner had been assaulted by Brooks in the United States Senate chamber on May 22, 1856. Moved by these various events, Dryer made his first determined assault on slavery in the Oregonian of July 12, 1856. In strongest terms he arraigned the system which had always been a source of discord and whose present "fearful recklessness" now threatened the actual dissolution of the Union.[1] He also attacked Lane for his action in the Sumner-Brooks affair in serving as Brooks' second when the latter challenged Senator Henry Wilson to a duel; also when Brooks challenged Anson Burlingame. Lane's personal sympathies were thus publicly declared, but the Oregonian objected especially to his thus compromising and crippling the Territory which he represented.[2]

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[1] See Argus, October 4, 1856.
[2] Ibid., November 1, 1856.

It has been shown that in the elections of 1854, 1855 and 1856, the Oregonian strongly opposed statehood. In the last election its opposition had been very pronounced, indeed. In a leader, "Shall Oregon Become a State?" in the issue of November first of the same year, Dryer turned squarely about and began advocating state organization. He attributed his change of attitude to the policy of the Buchanan Administration in acting as "the handmaid for the extension of slavery over free territory." In his own words, "If we are to have the institution of slavery fastened upon us here, we desire the people resident in Oregon to do it and not the will and power of a few politicians in Washington City. If the power of the regular army is to be used to crush out freedom in the Territories . . . we had better throw off our vassalage and become a state at once."

This seemed to be the general sentiment of the people of Oregon. Whereas in the election of 1856 the question of statehood had been lost by 249 votes, in the very next year it was to win by an overwhelming majority of 5938. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill had opened up the foreign issue of slavery in distant Oregon and had set movements in operation which were to result in complete political realignment. Likewise, the aftermath of the Kansas-Nebraska bill—the strife over Kansas and the National Administration's interference therein—was reflected in the revolution of public sentiment in the isolated Territory on the subject of statehood. It was the general determination that Oregon must be made secure against the possibility of the distress of "Bleeding Kansas" and a state organization seemed to promise the only security.

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[1] "We dislike modern abolitionism as much as we do slavery; and although we shall never go where slavery is already established for the purpose of opposing it, we shall contend against its introduction here or elsewhere, where freedom now exists."—Oregonian, November 1, 1856.

[2] Oregonian, September 20, 1856.

CHAPTER VII

THE NATIONAL ISSUE IN OREGON IN 1857

The session of the legislature which met December 2, 1856, passed what had become a customary act, calling for a vote at the ensuing election on the question of holding a constitutional convention. Considering the narrow margin by which the measure had been defeated the preceding June, and in view of the fact that the Oregonian had changed front on the issue, the result of the coming election was almost a foregone conclusion; so nearly so that it was provided that at the same time at which the vote should be taken, delegates should be elected to the convention. As far as the people of Oregon could bring it about, statehood was imminent. In the erection of the framework of the new government vital issues were involved. How those issues were met and settled, the following pages will endeavor to show.

To the Republicans the one paramount issue was that of freedom or slavery for the new state. To meet this great issue successfully they were zealous in extending their party organization. On February 11, 1857, a convention was held at Albany, at which delegates were present from eight counties—Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Yamhill, Linn, Umpqua, Polk and Benton.[1] W. T. Matlock, of Clackamas, was chairman, and Leander Holmes, of the same county, secretary. Other prominent men in attendance were Stephen Coffin, J. R. McBride, W. L. Adams, E. L. Applegate, T. S. Kendall, S. M. Gilmore and W. B. Daniels. The platform of principles adopted declared strongly against the extension of slavery over "any Territory of the United States now free." It held that there was no real difference as to the "true interests of Oregon" dividing honest Whigs, Democrats, Republicans, and Americans, who had had the manly independence to resist the usurpation and abuse of power on the part of "the present ruling faction."[2] It bespoke the necessity of the Union of all free and independent citizens to secure the adoption of a "Free State Constitution" for Oregon. "We therefore . . . announce ourselves as the 'Free State Republican Party' of Oregon, and as such will fight the political battle of freedom." Another important plank in the platform was that declaring for the immediate construction of a central Pacific Railroad and for the improvement of rivers and harbors of a national character, by congressional appropriations. A Territorial Executive Committee was elected and more thorough county organization urged.

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[1] Proceedings, in Oregonian, February 21, 1857.

[2] "The gentlemen who composed the convention seem to have imagined themselves the first advance guard who have ever had the courage to assault the citadel of the Salem dynasty, or who dare strike for freedom."—Oregonian, February 21.

"The Nigger-worshipping convention at Albany came off last week and was a slim affair."—Statesman, February 17.

A committee composed of W. L. Adams, Thos. Pope and Stephen Coffin was selected to prepare an address to the people of Oregon. This address was prepared at length, with great care and was not published until two months after the convention.[1] It was a complete and most able presentation of the slavery question in American politics, since 1784, when a resolution denouncing the slave trade was passed in the Continental Congress. Facts were cited to show that the General Government in all its legislation for seventy years, showed a strong tendency to carry out the wishes of the founders of the government, who looked upon slavery as a great national calamity to be tolerated where it existed, but who shaped the Constitution and all their legislation so as to prepare the way for its gradual extinction. In all this salutary legislation, from the time of the passage of the Ordinance of 1787, onward, the opposition of South Carolina had been marked. The growth and extension of this opposition throughout the South was traced, resulting finally in the Kansas-Nebraska bill, "which has raised the present storm that now rocks the fabric of the Union to its center." The farce of popular sovereignty was shown in a vivid sketch of conditions in Kansas. The modern Democratic party was declared by its policy to have made slavery the paramount issue. The only security for the perpetuity of the Union now lay in "non-extension"—the cardinal principle of the Republican party. Clear-cut and well defined, the dominant issue was presented squarely to the people of Oregon.

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[1] For text, see Oregonian, April 18, and Argus, April 11.

In conclusion, local affairs were treated and the Democratic administration in Oregon was attacked along the following lines: the "frittering away" of public funds and appropriations; keeping the state capital question inflamed; making the Indian war a party war; enactment of the Viva Voce law; tardiness in completing land surveys.

For a thorough understanding of the situation in Oregon at this time, it will be necessary here to give attention to what was taking place in the ranks of Democracy. As has been suggested, the yoke of Bush and the Salem Clique was galling to many Democrats. In the first place such abject obedience as was demanded was humiliating, and a reproach to men of strong individualism. In the second place, there was a protest against monopolizing the perquisites of Democratic Administration by a small, self-constituted ring.[1] The spirit of mutiny was rising. It was felt in the session of the legislature of '56-'57 and began to be manifested early in 1857. The Democratic Standard had come to be looked upon as an anti-machine paper. At a Democratic caucus held January 20 while the legislature was in session it was formally discarded from the party and denounced as an organ of the opposition. The vote declaring such action, however, was close—15 to 12.[2] The issue was thus joined. On the one side was the organization or machine, standing for unquestioning obedience to party rule and declaring for the binding authority of regular party conventions, or for "caucus sovereignty." On the other, were the independent Democrats who denied the absolute authority of party or caucus action. The former were called "the hards"; the latter, "the softs."

Bush at once took up the fight against the mutinous, beginning with an attack on the twelve who formed the minority in the above mentioned caucus.[1] Prominent among these were Nat. Ford of Polk, J. C. Avery of Benton, Andrew Shuck of Yamhill and J. K. Kelly of Clackamas, the latter being president of the Council. The Statesman's definition of an independent Democrat was "one who votes for the meanest kind of a Know Nothing, nigger-worshipping apostate from the Democratic party."[2] But the opposition was not to be dissipated this time by the mere applying to it a few ugly names. The revolt grew and preparations were made in different counties for nominating independent Democratic tickets as opposed to the regular.

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[1] As popularly conceived, the Salem Clique was composed of Asahel Bush, L. F. Grover, B. F. Harding, J. W. Nesmith and R. P. Boise.

[2] Statesman, January 27, 1857.

Nearly all the regular Democratic precinct and county conventions held in the spring of 1857 followed the lead of the caucus of January 20, in denouncing the Standard and hurling defiance at all bolters. The disregard of party nominations was held to be the unpardonable sin in politics.[3] The attitude of the "hards" toward the "softs" is summed up in the expression of Labish precinct, Marion county:[4] "Whereas, there are some persons who profess to belong to the Democratic party and talk about the true Democracy and stigmatize the Democratic party now in power as a 'clique'; Resolved—That we recognize none as Democrats who do not support with their votes the present Democratic organization, and further, that those who bolt or countenance bolting should not be recognized as belonging to the regular organization." Some counties, however, assumed a neutral, judicial attitude. The Multnomah convention attributed the division to controversies in which the Democratic press "have so wantonly indulged, and we repudiate such as anti-Democratic and unjust."[5]

Despite the gathering clouds, Bush stated April 7 that the party was never more vigorous and strong; that it had a constitution fully strong enough "to spew out the putrid matter which had collected on its stomach." The characteristic attitude of Bush toward opposition in the ranks was exactly stated by him in the Statesman editorial, April 14: "Divisions are not to be avoided by winking at error and temporizing with treason and traitors. If you would have a healthy body, cast off the rotten limbs. . . . A cancer can't be healed until the affected parts are removed. The knife must precede the plaster. Caustic before salve." Bush was no compromiser. With him it was war to the last.

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[1] Statesman, January 27, February 3 and February 24.

[2] Ibid., March 31.

[3] Declaration of South Salem precinct. Statesman, April 7.

[4] Statesman, March 31.

[5] Ibid., April 7.

Such was the general situation in the Oregon Democratic party, when the Democratic Territorial convention met at Salem on April 13. The "hards" were in complete control of the convention, which fact was strongly emphasized by the platform adopted.[1] The famous fifth and sixth resolutions gave full and adequate expression to the demand of the machine for party regularity and the exercise of party discipline. They demanded unwavering allegiance to the organization and its candidates and placed all who refused it under the ban of party excommunication.[2] The seventh resolution denounced the Standard and a special one was adopted, "that this convention recognize the Portland Times as Democratic and its editor as a worthy man." Thus easily was the enduement or deprivation of Democracy accomplished by enactment in the days of the Oregon Democratic Regime.

The position taken by the assembled Democrats upon the question of slavery and their attitude toward it, is not less suggestive and significant. They denied in general terms the right of the Federal Government to interfere with such domestic institutions of states or territories as were recognized by the Constitution, and deprecated attempts to exercise such a right as subversive of republicanism and productive of anarchy. This led directly to an expression on the situation in Oregon. Noting the fact that the people were called on to elect delegates to a constitutional convention and to pass upon the question of slavery in Oregon before the Democratic party should again assemble, they declared that in the choice of those delegates they would not discriminate between pro-slavery and free state Democrats; that the delegates should not predetermine that question in the formation of the constitution, but should submit the same in a separate clause to be voted upon directly by the people. Here was a practical recognition of the doctrine of popular sovereignty to which Oregon Democrats long pointed with pride.[1] It was all the more popular with them as a solution, in that it saved them the necessity of assuming an embarrassing if not fatal position upon the all-important question. The paramount issue with Oregon Democrats was Oregon Democracy and its perpetuity. Party declaration upon the disturbing issue of slavery, which would foment party dissension and invite party disruption and loss of power, must be avoided at all hazards. The one consuming desire of the regular or machine Democrats was to maintain the organization intact. From this standpoint it was therefore a very serious situation which confronted the Democracy. Hence the humor and significance of the eleventh and following resolution could hardly have appealed to the convention: "Resolved—That each member of the Democratic party in Oregon may freely speak and act according to his individual convictions of right and policy upon the question of slavery in Oregon, without in any manner impairing his standing in the Democratic party on that account—provided that nothing in these resolutions shall be construed in toleration of black republicanism, abolitionism or any other factor or organization arrayed in opposition to the

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[1] Proceedings—Statesman, April 21; Oregonian, April 25.

[2] **Fifth Resolution:** That we repudiate the doctrine that a representative or a delegate can, in pursuance of the wishes or fancied interests of the district he represents, go into or remain out of a caucus or convention of his party, and refuse to support the nominations thereof, and still maintain his standing as a Democrat.

Sixth Resolution: That the re-election of any representative or delegate, thus refusing to support Democratic nominations, would *not* "be an endorsement or approval of his conduct, beyond which the Democracy of other districts would have no right to enquire, but that it would be both the right and the duty of sound Democrats everywhere, to discard him as a disorganizer and an enemy."

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[1] Resolution adopted by Linn County Democratic convention, March, 1858: With pride and exultation we point the citizens of the States and Territories to the course pursued by the people in Oregon in framing, canvassing and adopting their state constitution. . . Because here, the principles embodied in the Kansas-Nebraska bill have had their first and only fair and legitimate test; and here, too, their wisdom, equity and practicability have been triumphantly vindicated.—In Statesman, March 16, 1858.

Democratic party." The artless, serious manner in which Oregon Democrats were thus formally granted the exceptional boon of holding individual convictions on a political issue, is in itself a striking and sufficient commentary on the absolutism of the Democratic Regime.

For the fourth time the Democrats nominated Lane for delegate. The Clique would have preferred another man, but his hold upon the people was still strong, and in the face of threatened rebellion in the ranks, the leaders feared to put up a less popular man.[1] The reception in certain counties of the convention's proceedings was ominous of coming schism in the Democratic party. For example, the National Democrats in Yamhill county withdrew from the regular county convention, which endorsed the Salem platform and reassembled in a convention of their own. They put out a separate ticket and refused to support Lane unless he should unconditionally repudiate the fifth, sixth and seventh resolutions of the late Territorial convention.[2] Similar action was taken in Clatsop, Multnomah, Clackamas and Benton counties and Democratic disaffection existed in some measure throughout the Territory. It found expression in the action of G. W. Lawson, an independent, free state Democrat, who announced his candidacy for delegate in opposition to Lane. The Republicans did not yet consider their organization strong enough to warrant their nominating a candidate.

The Democrats were largely successful in their efforts to avoid raising the slavery issue in the June election and there was no opposition sufficiently strong to force that issue. In a few counties "Free State Conventions" were held for "the single purpose of electing delegates to form a state constitution;"[3] but comparatively little was accomplished. The Oregonian realized that the opposition had little to gain and much to lose in drawing party lines in the selection of delegates to the convention and deprecated such action.[1] The anxiety of the Democrats to avoid disaster on the slavery question is reflected in the proceedings of various of their county conventions held in the spring of 1857. Stoutly denying that theirs was a pro-slavery party, they revolted at the idea of making slavery a party issue and followed the lead of the Salem convention in demanding a separate vote of the people on the question, when the constitution should be submitted.[2] But while granting that members of the party should vote for a free state if they saw fit, the latter were urgently recommended to guard against "in any way countenancing that contention-loving, union-hating party called the Black Republican party."[3]

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[1] Private letter—Nesmith to Deady, May 3, 1857, concerning the convention: "The 'institution' was decidedly *hard*. A great amount of enthusiasm was exhausted upon the platform but not a d—— bit upon the candidate. I accompanied the 'amiable' Doctor [Drew] and Bush to Portland and saw the 'true principles of the Government' [Lane] placed squarely upon the platform. He mounted it with the same alertness that he would any other hobby to be ridden in the direction of his own success."

[2] Proceedings, Oregonian, May 9.

[3] Lane County Convention, May 14.

The campaign of 1857 was peculiar in the history of Oregon politics. The success of the state constitutional convention issue was practically assured and for the first time in years there was no struggle over this question. Slavery was beginning to cast its shadow over the Territory and presented the only real issue before the people. But the determined and effective efforts of the Democrats had succeeded largely in obscuring or at least waiving that issue. It was not a clear-cut party campaign. Both the candidates for delegate were Democrats, which was expressive of the discord and division in Democratic ranks. The opposition was inchoate and unorganized. In the absence of a candidate to support and issues to defend, Editor Dryer of The Oregonian took little interest in the contest, which certainly bespeaks the abnormal nature of the campaign. Adams of The Argus, however, entered the lists for Lawson against the Salem "caucus sovereignty" platform.[4] The rather chaotic nature of the situation may be indicated by noting the different kinds of county tickets which were supported. Washington county had the only avowed Know Nothing ticket in the field,[5] and it was successful over the Democratic. Multnomah had an "anti-Salem" or independent ticket which won generally over the Democrats.[1] Yamhill had two Democratic tickets and a partial Republican one. The latter was successful where it offered candidates. In other cases the "softs" or "National Democrats" won heavily over the "hards." Linn presented an independent, free state ticket, which proved no match for organized Democracy. Columbia added to the variety by putting out a Whig ticket, the "last of the Mohicans," which, however, manifested sufficient vitality to defeat the Democracy. Benton had two Democratic tickets—the "National" and the "Bush federal," the former being generally successful. The Clackamas opposition was denominated "Republican and Independent" but lost heavily. In Marion, Polk, Douglas and Wasco, the Democrats won easily over the opposition, variously denominated.

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[1] Oregonian editorial on "State Constitution," April 4.

[2] "The Democratic party is not a pro-slavery party, but contends that slave holders have equal rights in the Territories with their Northern brethren and wishes to maintain them in peaceable enjoyment of those rights."—From Lane County convention proceedings in Statesman, April 14.

[3] Ibid.

[4] "We hear of some who refuse to vote for either candidate. We think this is foolish—very. There are many good reasons why every freeman who has a soul ought to vote at this election."—Argus, May 23.

[5] Supra, page 70.

In the general results of the election, Lane defeated Lawson by a vote of 5662 to 3471. The vote for the constitutional convention was 7617, opposed by a vote of only 1679. In the legislature, the Democrats secured but a majority of one in the council, while the opposition placed ten members in the house. Fully one-third of the delegates-elect to the Constitutional Convention were anti-Democratic.[2] The opposition, though unorganized, had profited by the defection in the Democratic ranks.

The people of Oregon had now committed themselves unequivocally for state government. Their delegates had been chosen to the constitutional convention which was to meet in August. The question of Oregon free or Oregon slave, must soon be settled. The realization of this fact now began to stir the Territory, and whereas there had been little discussion of the slavery question before the June election, from that time on until the vote upon the Constitution in November, and even afterward, the question was prominently before the people. The Argus of August 1, said: "The Oregon papers that come to hand this week are pretty much filled up with the great question that now constitutes the politics of the Nation." Feeling became intense. At this distance it may seem almost inconceivable that there was any basis for such agitation; that there was any danger of Oregon's becoming a slave state. Whatever may be the mature conclusions on this point after the lapse of a half century, the fact remains that there was apparently very serious danger at the time. Indeed it has been recently stated by a careful writer who was a participant in Oregon politics in 1857, that the people of Oregon were then in far more danger of the introduction of slavery among them than the people of Kansas were at any time.[1] The state of blind subservience of the masses of Democracy to their leaders has been dwelt upon. This fact was ominous to free state advocates, for while few of the Democratic leaders had thus far come out aggressively for slavery, the sympathies of several of them were well known. Lane had shown himself a Southern sympathizer and a pro-slavery man, and his influence upon the rank and file, who felt, in a vague way, that "the king can do no wrong," was sinister. The Statesman had taken no definite position. But it had been free to abuse and berate free state agitators, and this was far from reassuring. Newspapers were started for the advocacy of slavery. The adaptability of the institution to Oregon was freely argued. The National Administration had committed itself to the slavery propaganda and its attitude toward federal office holders and politicians made them at least very charitable in their attitude toward the sacred institution of the South. And finally, the Dred Scott decision had rendered that institution national—had invested it with the sanction of the final and most sacred tribunal of the Nation.

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[1] Thus Dryer, who ran for joint-representative for Washington and Multnomah, was elected as a Know Nothing in one and an Independent in the other.

[2] Official returns in Statesman, July 7.

These are some of the general considerations which, apparently at least, rendered slavery an actual menace to Oregon. To arrive at a closer understanding of the real situation during this period—of the situation as it actually appeared to the people then, not as it appears now in perspective—it will be necessary to notice the opinions, the impressions, the apprehensions of the people and upon what they were based. These are largely to be found and reflected in the newspaper press of the Territory.

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[1] T. W. Davenport, in Oregon Historical Quarterly for September, 1908, p. 226.

From observations at Salem in his capacity as legislator during the session of '56-'57, Dryer avowed at the end of the session that the leaders, office holders and office-hunters had been busily preparing all winter, with ever-increasing boldness, to force slavery into Oregon; that several of the prominent leaders had openly declared that the Democratic party in Oregon was in favor of the introduction of slavery.[1] A little later he declared it to be an undeniable fact that nine-tenths of the Territorial office holders could be counted upon to exert their whole official influence in favor of slavery; that they were busily engaged in "whipping in" those who disagreed with them by branding them as Abolitionists and Black Republicans.[2] In an editorial—"Foreshadowing Events—Lane and Deady—" Dryer cited: Lane's actions in the Sumner-Brooks affair, and his recent importation from the East of a man named Hibben to edit the Portland Times as a pro-slavery organ; the public advocacy, by Judge Deady, one of the most prominent, gifted and popular Democrats in Oregon, of the introduction of slavery; the establishment of new journals in the Territory for the purpose of defending "that beneficent institution."[3] In August he told of the determined and aggressive canvass being made to win over to the cause of slavery the delegates to the Constitutional Convention. He declared that while during the campaign there was not a single newspaper that dared advocate slavery, there were now at least five of the eight in the Territory that directly or indirectly favored that institution.[4] But the more open and pronounced became the contest, the better it suited the pugnacious Dryer, who defied the hosts of slavery in language expressive and picturesque.[1]

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[1] Oregonian, February 7, 1857.

[2] Ibid., March 21.

[3] Ibid., June 20.

[4] The eight papers—Oregonian, Argus, Standard, Pacific Christian Advocate, Statesman, Times, Table Rock Sentinel and the Occidental Messenger. The last four were certainly included in the five referred to. The Standard, while Democratic, opposed slavery. Rev. Thos. H. Pearne, editor of the Pacific Christian Advocate, a Methodist organ, shut his eyes and said there was no slavery issue in Oregon.

However, the Argus, as the Republican organ of the Territory, was looked upon as the true exponent of free state ideals. It contained more contributed articles on the subject at issue than any other paper, and Editor Adams wielded a pen as defiant and trenchant as that of Dryer. While the Constitutional convention was in session, in an editorial on "Aspects of Locofocoism," Adams gave a review of the political situation which was sufficiently suggestive and significant to warrant special attention.[2] He declared that among the Democrats in the Territory one pro-slavery man was equal to ten free state men. By which he meant that whereas the latter, afraid of the displeasure of their leaders and fearing the taunt of "Black Republican," were silent and passive, the pro-slavery men, by their aggressive activity, their political tact and sagacity, their "brazen, boisterous effrontery," more than made up for their disparity in numbers.

In support of this contention he offered several pertinent proofs or illustrations. First, that while the Democratic party probably had a free state strength of two to one, yet Jo Lane, a rabid, pro-slavery man, had been made the candidate for Congress over free state men of greater ability. Second, out of the five Democratic organs, three of them were doing their utmost to fasten slavery upon Oregon, while the other two evinced "such a craven and cowardly character" as to leave their real convictions in doubt.[3] Third, the "driven-nigger" majority meekly submitted and voted for Deady, the "nigger-driver's pet," for president of the Constitutional convention. Fourth, that while the Democratic party had reiterated it that each member was perfectly free to speak, write or vote pro or con on the subject without impairing his standing as a Democrat, Judge Williams had lost caste and influence with his party for no other crime than that of having published an article in the Salem organ in favor of a free state.[1] And that while the Judge had been virtually ostracized for writing one letter against the introduction of slavery in Oregon, neither of the editors who were zealous in sowing pro-slaveryism broadcast over the Territory, nor Deady who had made stump speeches for slavery during the last canvass, had failed to raise themselves in the estimation of the "nigger-driving wing, while not a single driven-nigger, so far as we are aware, has had the audacity to whimper a syllable of doubt as to their orthodoxy as Democrats."

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[1] "Come on, ye hirelings of slaveocracy, and 'd——d be he who first cries hold! Enough.' "—Oregonian, June 27.

[2] Argus, September 5.

[3] The five papers—Statesman, Jacksonville Herald, Table Rock Sentinel (Jacksonville), Messenger, Times. The last three were the rabid slavery advocates. The Herald was established August 1, 1857. Adams did not include the Standard, as it had been formally read out of the party.

The viewpoints of the Oregonian and the Argus, the two radical anti-slavery organs, have been given. Their statements are not presented as conclusive evidence. They were probably colored by partisan prejudice. But Dryer and Adams presented the situation as they saw it and it was generally so accepted by their readers. The correctness of the presentation of the conditions made by the Oregonian and Argus and of the conclusions drawn, can be determined to a great degree by the evidence presented by the opposition press.

The Statesman was looked upon as a neutral in the contest. Bush declared that the sole question at issue was—"Will it pay?"the moral question scarcely entering into the problem at all.[2] But in warning the "Northern Kansas fanatics and maniacs" of the results of their agitation, he presented a succinct view of the situation, which, to say the least, strongly corroborates those views given by Dryer and Adams. "Although it cannot now be safely said whether Oregon will be a free or slave state," he wrote in March, he declared that should some New England Emigrant Aid Society attempt to abolitionize Oregon, the latter would certainly enter the Union as a slave state. "Such is the temper of the Oregonians; they want no outside interference." The sweeping and startling admission was made that "Every man here realizes and acknowledges that the number of voters in favor of introducing slavery into Oregon is at least 100 per cent greater than it was one year or eighteen months ago; we believe it is 300 per cent greater."

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[1] Infra, page 115.

[2] "Did our climate, productions and market unquestionably favor slave labor, Oregon would knock for admission into the Union as a slave state."—Statesman, March 31, 1857.

After the June election, Bush threw open the columns of the Statesman for signed contributed articles on the slavery question. Judge Williams' famous free state letter appeared July 28, which will be noticed later. A few letters followed, pro and con. But as a rule free state contributors, other than Democrats, looked to the Argus as their medium, and of the free state Democrats, very few, indeed, had anything to contribute. On the other hand the pro-slavery agitators were inclined to turn to the pronounced pro-slavery organs. One of the contributors was F. B. Martin, of Yamhill County, who argued that cheaper labor was needed to develop the agricultural resources of the country, and that Oregon's salubrious climate would be beneficial to Negro slaves.[1] J. W. Mack, of Lane county, argued against the contention that nature had decreed against slavery in Oregon.[2] John Whiteaker, destined to become the first state governor, avowed strong pro-slavery sentiments and announced that making Oregon a free state would abolitionize the country and be a decided step in the direction of "equality of the races."[3]

The Jacksonville Sentinel stated the issue unreservedly, and bluntly committed the Oregon Democracy to the Southern cause: "There is no longer any doubt but the issue will hereafter be narrowed down to slavery and anti-slavery. The Black Republicans will rally under the banner of Free State and Free Soil in Oregon and the pro-slavery party under the Constitution and the measures to perpetuate the Union."[4]

But the ne plus ultra of the slavery propaganda in Oregon was found in the Occidental Messenger. It was established at Corvallis in the summer of 1857, through the instrumentality, it was thought, of J. C. Avery, a prominent Democratic politician. More radical, vehement and defiant advocacy of the slavery dogma could hardly have been expected in South Carolina, than was given by this paper away out on the extreme Northwestern frontier, over two thousand miles from the home of the "divinely appointed institution." In the very first issues, in calling attention to the subject of domestic slavery, "now agitating the public mind of Oregon from one extent of the Territory to the other," the imported editor, L. P. Hall, declared that he not only believed it to be right in principle, but that the prosperity of the country depended upon its adoption. "We desire to awaken the people of Oregon fully to the importance of this subject. African slavery is the conservative feature in our system of government . . . and must be broadly maintained or the historian may now be alive who will record the dissolution" of the Union. Again, "The slavery representation in the United States Senate needs strengthening . . . and a fine opportunity is now presented to restore the equilibrium by the admission of Oregon with a slavery clause."[1] But more significant and ominous yet was the declaration made by the Messenger at the time of the vote upon the Constitution in November: "Whether our principles triumph in the present election or not, so strong is our faith in the omnipotence of Truth, that we shall throw out upon our banner, to the pro-slavery men of Oregon, in whom we place our chief reliance, the consecrated words of Paul Jones—'We have not yet begun to fight.' "[2] In other words, the wishes of the people of Oregon as expressed at the polls were not to be recognized as final. Here was a frank portrayal of the characteristic attitude of the slave power in politics. It was a covert threat that the doctrine of popular sovereignty, the shibboleth of Democracy, would be prostituted in Oregon as ruthlessly as it had in Kansas, should the expression of that sovereignty be inimical to the interests of slavery.

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[1] Statesman, August 4.

[2] Ibid., August 18.

[3] Reprint in Statesman, October 27, from Occidental Messenger.

[4] Quoted in the Argus, July 25. The editor of the Sentinel was W. G. T'Vault, the first editor of the Spectator, issued at Oregon City, February 5, 1846.

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[1] Quoted in Oregonian, July 4.

[2] Quoted in Statesman, November 17.

GEO. H. WILLIAMS

AUTHOR OF FAMOUS "FREE STATE LETTER." U. S. SENATOR,
ATTORNEY-GENERAL UNDER PRESIDENT GRANT

Enough has been said to show conclusively that there was a degree of danger that the people of Oregon might decide in favor of a slave state. Bush had said that the only question was—"Will it pay?" And at the same time he added that in his belief, pro-slavery sentiment had increased three hundred per cent within a year or a year and a half. Evidently the opinion was growing that it *would* pay. Leading and influential Democrats were declaring that slavery was adaptable to Oregon and was desirable. The Democratic masses were in the habit of believing what their leaders told them. The Democratic press, where not openly and radically pro-slavery, was ominously non-committal, and it must be remembered that as a rule the rank and file of Democracy read their own papers as the law and the gospel and read none other. They did not see the Oregonian and the Argus. They spurned the Black Republican, free state agitators as "unclean," politically. They were not concerned with the moral aspect of the situation. Under all these circumstances it is not so strange after all, that the public sentiment of Oregon was undergoing a subtle change; that this change was felt and recognized by many close and anxious observers in the summer of 1857; and that grave apprehensions of the result were entertained.

One of these apprehensive observers was George H. Williams, chief justice of Oregon Territory by appointment of President Pierce and whose Democracy had never been questioned. On July 28th, the whole first page of the Statesman was occupied with a contributed article over his signature which is known in Oregon history as "Judge Williams' Free State Letter." A man of prominence and influence in his party, he entertained hopes of political advancement not unnatural in a man of his ambition and ability. He was warned by friends as to the results of the publication of his letter and he himself clearly understood that "in those days to be a sound Democrat, if it was not necessary to advocate slavery, it *was* necessary to keep still upon the subject."[1] But from the time when he became a voter he had been opposed to the extension of slavery into the new states.[2] While many other Oregon

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[1] Private letter: Williams to Geo. H. Himes, August 26, 1907. This letter was written "fifty years after," on request of Mr. Himes, as a personal review of the considerations which called forth the Free State Letter.

[2] Ibid.

Democrats of more or less prominence, doubtless felt as he did upon the subject, he was the only Democrat of standing in the Territory[1] who jeopardized political ambitions by entering the contest on the side of "nigger-worshippers, Union-hating abolitionists and dis-union black Republicans." But Judge Williams differed from the latter in that he ignored the moral issue altogether, attacking the question entirely from its practical, financial aspect. It was from arguments presented from this viewpoint that slavery sentiment was growing and the Judge recognized that nothing but a complete refutation of these arguments would be effective in turning the tide.[2] "What was needed at this juncture was just what happened—an earnest, thoughtful communication from one who could not be accused of having any designs on the unity and harmony of the Democratic party."[3]

To review very briefly the Free State Letter—the writer, in a concise, historical introduction showed that before the slave question was dragged into the political arena, the judgment of all parts of the country was against the advantages of slavery; that even in those districts whose climate and agricultural resources specially favored the institution, its ultimate benefits were doubtful. How much less expedient then would be its introduction in Oregon, whose conditions could easily be shown to be anything but favorable to a system of slave labor. In the first place, there is no ambition, no enterprise, no energy in such labor. One white man is worth more than two Negro slaves—slave labor is "demonstrably the dearest of any."[4] Second, Negro slaves other than house servants would be perfect leeches upon the farmers during the long, rainy winters.

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[1] Address before the Legislative Assembly of Oregon, delivered February 14, 1899. Quoted in Oregon Historical Quarterly for September, 1908, p. 232.

[2] Personal conversation with Judge Williams, July 28, 1909, in effect as follows: The letter has been criticized as written on too low a plane. I knew what I was doing. It was the only argument I could make to the people I wanted to influence. I had my own views as to the morals of the question, having always been an opponent of slavery, but generally speaking the morals of slavery were not called in question by the people. To have hinted that side of the question would have roused opposition to me as a "d——d abolitionist" and Black Republican and my letter would have gone for naught.

[3] Davenport, in Oregon Historical Quarterly for September, 1908, p. 236.

[4] John Randolph.

Third, the risk and expense in transporting slaves to distant Oregon, and the ease of escape in the sparsely settled, wooded and mountainous country, would render investment in slave property altogether too hazardous. Fourth, the escaped Negroes would find refuge and consort with Oregon's Indian enemies and become an added menace to the people. Fifth, slavery can no more stand as a paying institution with one-half of public sentiment arrayed against it than a house can stand with one corner stone. Sixth, introduce slavery, and free white labor will become degraded, if not impossible to secure altogether. To mix slave labor and free labor aggravates the evils of each and subtracts from the benefits of each. Finally, can Oregon afford to throw away the friendship of the North —the overruling power of the nation—for the sake of slavery? These and other points were supported by such close, logical reasoning, and backed up by an array of facts and figures which made them irrefutable and convincing.

The effects of the letter were soon evident. First, in the changed attitude manifested toward Judge Williams by his party.[1] In his own words, his hopes for the United States senatorship,[2] "vanished like the pictures of a morning dream. I was unsound on the slavery question."[3] But the influence of the letter upon public opinion was soon manifest throughout the Territory. Through the medium of the Statesman, it reached practically all the Democratic voters. It came bringing words of warning, of calm reasoning and of practical advice—and from a well-known fellow Democrat whose word was that of authority. His presentation of the situation was convincing. As pro-slavery sentiment had up to this time been steadily rising, from the publication of the Free State Letter on to the election in November, it seemed steadily to recede.[4]

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[1] Letter: Williams to Himes—"The pro-slavery men claimed that though I pretended to be a Democrat, I was an abolitionist in disguise, and to be called an abolitionist then, especially in Oregon, was to be classed among outlaws and enemies to the peace of the country."

[2] Personal conversation: Had it not been for that letter I would have been one of Oregon's first senators.

[3] Address before the legislature, 1907.

[4] Davenport, "The Slavery Question in Oregon," in Oregon Historical Quarterly for September, 1908, pp. 234, 235. "After the circulation of this address, any observing person could notice that a change was taking place; any sensitive person could feel it."

The Constitutional convention assembled at Salem on August 17th. It was a matter of no little political significance, as Adams pointed out in the Argus, that Judge Deady, "the only man in the convention who took bold ground for slavery while canvassing for his seat,"[1] should be elected president of Oregon's constituent assembly. The Democrats organized the convention, just as they would a session of the legislature. Dryer was a member and in editorial correspondence to the Oregonian related that the "soft" and free state Democrats who had opposed the machine organization in the late election, now did penance and joined the Clique forces in caucus. He called attention to the fact that no delegate opposed to the Salem Clique had been placed at the head of a committee and declared that every committee had a pro-slavery majority.

Early in the convention Jesse Applegate presented resolutions to the effect that as a large proportion of the delegates had been chosen with the understanding that the question of slavery would not be decided by the convention but by the people directly, all debate on the subject should be considered out of order. The presentation of these resolutions was followed by an extended flow of oratory. Some acquiesced, while others objected strenuously to having the liberties of free speech thus arbitrarily abridged. Alignment on the issue was not partisan, but for the most part the resolutions, which failed to pass, were opposed by the free state men. Other resolutions were introduced against the admission of free Negroes. On September 11, J. R. McBride, of Yamhill, the only member of the convention elected under the name of Republican, in fulfillment of pre-election pledges to his constituents,[2] introduced the anti-slavery provision of the Ordinance of 1787. It was defeated by a vote of 41 to 9. McBride was chagrined to find some of his trusted free state associates voting against him, on the plea that his measure was "too radical."[1] The convention determined to present the question of slavery and that of the admission of free Negroes as separate issues to be decided by the people, at the time of the submission of the Constitution. With the solution of the vexed question thus diplomatically arranged, the members proceeded with the further business of the convention, with which it is not the purpose to deal here.

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[1] Oregonian, August 22.

Observations on the convention are based chiefly on the stenographic reports of P. J. Malone, found in the Oregonian in issues from August 22 to October 10, inclusive.

[2] John R. McBride, address: "The Oregon Constitutional Convention," delivered before the annual meeting of the Oregon Historical Society, December 20, 1902. Proceedings for the years 1902-1905, p. 33.

The final vote on the completed Constitution was 34 to 11; absent or not voting, 15. The vote was almost wholly along party lines, the affirmative showing the strength of the Democratic ruling faction. With the affirmative voted most of the Anti-Salem Democrats, or those who were elected as such but who had been acting with the Clique. The "Opposition," including some "soft" Democrats, were found among the negative and "absent or not voting."

After the close of the Convention, Dryer voiced the objections of the Opposition to the Constitution. He maintained that future legislative assemblies had been "tied up" by the Convention's assuming to establish fundamental law; that there was too much of politics in the frame of government adopted—that it was drawn up with the main purpose of advancing the fortunes of the Oregon Democracy.[2] In the campaign which followed, the Oregonian, Argus, Standard—free state papers, and the Messenger, the rabid pro-slavery organ, opposed the adoption of the Constitution. Editor Adams branded it as "a huge viper, with poisonous fangs in its head, a legion of legs in its belly and a deadly sting in its tail."[3]

From the adjournment of the Convention September 18 to the election on November 9, the agitation over the slavery issue was intense. It was even reflected in the advertising columns of the press. In August, P. J. Malone, correspondent for the Sacramento Union, wrote that paper from Salem that the men who desired slavery in Oregon were limited to the comparatively few who had owned one or two negroes in some slave state; and who had early secured a section of land in Oregon under the donation land law; that they were generally too lazy to cultivate their own lands and thought it very desirable to have slaves to raise wheat that they might compete successfully with California farmers in California markets. On the other hand, those who had come later to Oregon, and had secured only 160 or 320 acres did not as a rule desire slavery. "And they are the more numerous class, as the ballot box will show."[1]

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[1] McBride address.

[2] Oregonian, September. 26.

[3] "We shall vote against the Constitution for many good reasons. . . It is now coiled up, labeled from head to tail with Democracy, trying to charm the people to take it into their bosom, when it will instill its poison into the body politic and render it as completely paralyzed as under the odious principle of caucus sovereignty."—Argus, October 10.

On November 9, the Constitution was adopted by the people of Oregon by a vote of 7195 to 3215. Free negroes were refused admission into Oregon by the overwhelming vote of 8640 to 1081.[2] One-fourth of the people desired slavery while about one-tenth only were willing to receive the negro free. The vote on slavery in a few of the southern counties was close, but was almost unanimous against the negro unenslaved.[3]

The summing up of the situation by Bush immediately after the election, is important as presenting the regular Democratic viewpoint.[4] He felicitated the party on having taken the "high and distinct ground of the Kansas principle on the subject of slavery," and "without any of those abuses or obstructions which have been most unfairly cast in the way of state organizations otherwheres, by designing and characterless politicians." He held that to bring to a successful conclusion the great, model scheme initiated by Douglas for adjusting the vexed question, it now remained only for Congress, a majority of the members of which had been elected on the basis of that scheme, to receive Oregon into the Union with or without slavery, as its Constitution should prescribe. This done and the nation could point to a bright and living example of Democratic policy, wrought out to a perfect demonstration in Oregon, as contrasted with conditions in Kansas, which had suffered from foreign Black Republican interference. He declared that Oregon Democrats, in their future policy would regard the question as settled and would recognize no difference in individual membership and influence between those who in the late election had voted for, and who had voted against slavery. "The watchword shall be harmony."

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[1] Quoted in Argus, September 12.

[2] Official returns in Statesman, December 22.

[3] See appendix for the vote in detail.

[4] Statesman, editorial: "Democracy and the Slave Question," November 17.

In another editorial in the same issue, Bush admonished eastern papers not to misinterpret the vote against slavery. He assured them that the majority of the Oregon electors were Southern born and bred, while a large majority of the Northern men were sound, Constitutional men, who would be characterized by the Black Republican press as "pro-slaveryites." "Let not Black Republicanism lay the flattering unction to its soul that we are free soilish here. We are as far from that as California or Virginia."

The Messenger refused to accept the result as final. Maintaining the doctrine of equal rights between the States, and that the Territories were common property, it contended that the people of a Territory, in the formation of a state government, had no power to exclude slave-holders, as the exercise of such a right would invalidate the common partnership. "As great an evil as disunion would be, we consider there is still a greater, and that is, submission to the unrestricted will of a reckless fanaticism which overrides the barriers erected by the Constitution for the protection of the minority, and tramples with ruthless iron heel, upon the plainest principles of justice and equality." Thus early was the standard of secession raised in Oregon. Before the election, C. E. Pickett, a zealous slavery apostle, self-imported from California, had written a letter to the Messenger advocating the call of a convention of pro-slavery men during the coming winter, whether the Constitution was adopted or not.[1] He expressed the belief that a line of policy could be agreed upon that would ensure them the balance of power in Oregon.

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[1] Republished in Statesman, November 10.

The regular session of the Territorial legislature met December 17. The organization or "hard" Democrats secured control of the assembly, officers being chosen on the issue of their allegiance to the fifth, sixth and seventh resolutions which had been adopted by the Democratic Territorial Convention in the spring. The assembly considered that it was meeting in an interregnum between a territorial and a state form of government, with the result that little was accomplished at this session. However, some discussions took place which are very significant, from a political point of view.

Wm. Allen, a "soft" Democrat from Yamhill county, offered the following preamble and resolution: "Whereas, it has been decided by the Supreme Court of the United States that Congress has no power to prohibit the introduction of slavery into the Territories; and, whereas, slavery is tolerated by the Constitution of the United States, therefore, Resolved—that the chair appoint a committee of three to report what legislation is necessary to protect the rights of persons holding slaves in this Territory."[1]

After following the heated Oregon newspaper controversies which followed so closely the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill and the troubles in Kansas, it is a matter of no little surprise to note the scant and tardy attention given the rendering of the Dred Scott decision. Apparently, it was looked upon by both the Democratic and the Opposition press as a two-edged sword, each being willing to allow the other to make the first attempt at wielding the dangerous weapon. The Oregonian ignored it. The Argus of August 29 reproduced Lincoln's Springfield, Illinois, speech of June 20, in answer to Douglas on the decision, but made no editorial comment until September 5. There was published in the Pacific Christian Advocate, in the absence of the editor, T. H. Pearne, a clipping from an exchange, headed "Judge Taney in 1819." In the article the words "infamous decision" occurred in allusion to the Scott case. The following week Pearne, whose sole purpose seemed to be to maintain his seat on the fence as regards the great issue of the day, apologized for the appearance of the article, emphasizing the fact that it was an extract and not the expression of a personal opinion. This roused Adams to reply: "We do not believe there is a Christian in the world who could say less of a decision (we view it as an opinion) that reduces a part of those for whom Christ died to the level of brutes, destroys state and territorial sovereignty and renders man-stealing national—a crime which by the Jewish law is punishable with death." As far as noted, this was about the extent of notice given the Dred Scott decision in the leading press of the Territory up to the meeting of the legislature.

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[1] Proceedings in Oregonian, December 26.

To return to the latter, the Allen resolution was indefinitely postponed by a vote of 17 to 9. The debate, however, took up a large part of the day on which the resolution was introduced. In support of the latter Allen made the statement—"There are some slaves here"—but no law to protect this kind of property. He argued—"If our Constitution is rejected by Congress, we shall remain a long time as we are, under our Territorial government, and by passing laws protecting property in slaves, we shall encourage immigration."

The statement has been made[1] that there was not one negro slave within the far-reaching boundaries of the Territory after Judge Williams' decision in the Ford case in 1853.[2] And such is the general understanding. From a purely legal standpoint this is true, as slavery was not recognized under the organic law of the Territory. It was at least true up to the time of the Dred Scott decision—after that, it was a debatable question. But in the course of the debate on the Allen resolution, at least three men made the statement, apparently as a matter of course and without thought of contradiction, that there were negro slaves in Oregon. J. W. Mack said—"My neighbor in Lane county owns slaves and is now in California endeavoring to test the validity of the fugitive slave law."[1] Dryer, as far as reported, offered the only contradiction to the statement that slavery existed in Oregon and that was apparently made from the legal standpoint—that slavery did not and could not exist because the organic act prohibited it.[2] In reply to him Allen said: "It has been proved upon this floor that slavery does exist in the Territory in several counties. There are some in Benton, Lane, Polk, Yamhill and I know not how many other counties. That matter was fairly proved on this floor on a former occasion and I do not deem it necessary to bring any further proof than the veracity of honorable gentlemen who are representative of their constituents here."[3]

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[1] T. W. Davenport, in Oregon Historical Quarterly for September, 1908, p 196.

[2] Supra, page 89.

In its report of the legislative proceedings the Statesman naturally did not devote as much space to this debate as did the Oregonian. The Allen resolution, involving the interpretation of the Dred Scott decision, was the entering wedge by which Oregon Democracy was to be split asunder, and its significance was pretty fully recognized at the time.[4] Indeed Allen, a "soft" Democrat, was promptly accused by the "hards" of having introduced his resolution merely to create discord in the ranks of Democracy, as he knew there was a difference of opinion among the machine or "hard" Democrats upon the subject.

The attitude of the pro-slavery men was well shown in remarks of Mack, of Lane, a "hard." He expressed surprise at the courage of the member from Yamhill in offering such a resolution at that period of Oregon affairs,[5] but announced that he would vote for it. "We have, under the Constitution as much right to hold our property—slaves—and have them protected as we have to hold our cattle and have them protected." He admitted, with an injured air, that he did not expect the resolution to pass as "we are used to having injustice done us," but avowed his determination to remain loyal to the Democratic party, "unless that shall become abolitionized." W. M. Hughes, a "hard" from Jackson county, took the same ground.

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[1] Proceedings in Statesman, December 22.

[2] Proceedings, Oregonian, January 30.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Dryer, in editorial correspondence to the Oregonian, January 23, 1858: "The Negro bill has kicked up quite a stir among the harmonious Democracy. The pro-slavery wing accuse the free state Democrats of having joined the Black Republicans."

[5] The resolution was introduced in December, following the decisive popular vote against slavery in November.

On the other hand, note the position of N. H. Cranor of Linn county, likewise a "hard." He held that the decision of the Supreme Court did not apply to Oregon as Congress in its act organizing the Territory had expressly prohibited slavery; that Congress had granted Oregon the privileges of the northwestern states in this matter and it had been their undoubted privilege to decide for or against slavery. He declared that immigrants to Oregon came with the full knowledge that slavery was prohibited and did not expect to hold such property in the Territory. Respects were then paid to Allen and other "soft" Democrats: "Men who have advocated Black Republican doctrine and supported Black Republican candidates, and were elected as avowed enemies to the decision of the Supreme Court certainly betray a strange inconsistency in advocating such doctrine as they do here. It comes with very poor grace from Black Republicans to charge Democrats with being Black Republicans—Democrats, too, who endorse the whole of the Dred Scott Decision."[1]

There was apparent basis for the charge that the opposition Democrats were acting with the intention of sowing dissension in the ranks of the regulars, and of thus breaking the power of Bush and the Salem wing of the party. The discussions and the vote[2] on the Allen resolution show how successful they were in their attempts. We find Mack and Cranor, both "hard" or machine Democrats, making opposite interpretations of the Dred Scott decision. Cranor, representing the free state or Douglas Democrats, still held to the principle of squatter sovereignty; while Mack, representing the Southern or proslavery Democrats, had gone beyond that doctrine in demanding the rights for slavery in the Territories which he claimed were recognized by the Supreme Court. Thus, despite the efforts of the leaders to keep the issue down, the coming break in the Oregon Democracy on the slavery question was forecasted in this debate.

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[1] Cranor's epithet of "Black Republican" refers to the opposition in general as no members of this session were elected under the name "Republican."

[2] In the vote on indefinite postponement, 13 "hards" and 4 opposition voted in the affirmative and 5 "hards" and 4 opposition in the negative.

In view of his dominant position in Oregon politics, the stand taken by Bush on the Dred Scott decision is important. In a long editorial—"The Power of a State over Slave Property"—appearing in the Statesman, December 8, he defended the doctrine of popular sovereignty. Opinions handed down in the decision were quoted to the effect that each state had the power to decide the question for itself. Whereupon Bush adds: "Nor is there any difference in this particular, between the power of the people moving in the formation of a state government, and the power of those already organized as a state. . . . It is the very gist of the Kansas-Nebraska principle that the *people* are called upon when they form a state government, to act upon the subject of slavery." He then proceeded to attack, on one hand, the abolitionists, who were determined to interfere with the rights of those owning slaves; who contended that the Constitution did not recognize slavery and therefore it could not lawfully exist within the Union. But, more important, on the other hand Bush said: "There is another class who declare that the Constitution does recognize property in slaves and that whatever is recognized by the Constitution is constitutional and national. Therefore slavery is constitutional and national." To refute this, the Scott decision is quoted to show that the Constitution recognizes and protects as property within the states *whatever the state laws determine to be property.*

Thus Bush interpreted the Dred Scott decision to harmonize with the doctrine of popular sovereignty. But it is noticeable that his discussion was limited to the immediate conditions in Oregon—i.e., to the situation presented in approaching statehood. As to the place, under the Dred Scott decision, of his favorite doctrine of popular sovereignty in the Territories themselves, he said nothing.

In the spring of the year 1857, the Democratic party announced its policy of ignoring the question of slavery as a political issue. In line with that policy it declared for the settlement of the question in Oregon in accordance with the doctrine of popular sovereignty. In the pursuance of such a course, the people of Oregon, after a period of turmoil, declared decisively against slavery. In the very month following that decision of the people, by which the Oregon Democracy had apparently so successfully evaded a dangerous issue, the Democrats were confronted with the dilemma presented by the Dred Scott Decision. Some, maintaining their allegiance to the principle of popular sovereignty, seized one horn of the dilemma, while others, more zealous in the cause of the slavery propaganda than in the maintenance of party consistency, seized the other. At the close of the year 1857 this readjustment had begun. The line of separation was not yet clearly marked, but it was indicated.

CHAPTER VIII

DEMOCRATIC DISCORD

The process of division in the Oregon Democracy along lines drawn by the interpretations of the Dred Scott decision had begun before the close of 1857. But the local factional differences were to overshadow the growing national schism for some months yet to come. The breach between the machine and the independent Democrats had been steadily growing wider. Revolt against the iron-clad, caucus sovereignty rule of the Clique and protest against the exploitation of the party for the personal benefit of a small coterie of politicians, were the principal bases for the attack against the Organization. At the beginning of the year 1858 it was evident that a complete split in the party was imminent.

In announcing to his readers that a movement was being launched whereby a new party was to come to light, Bush noted the fact that ever since the organization of the party in Oregon, there had been a faction, which, while adhering to the name, had never possessed the character of Democrats. "This mixed opposition have always blown the same whistle and beaten the same drum—always whining and whanging about the 'Salem Cli-que,—the 'Salem Platform,' 'hidden caucus' or 'secret cabal.' This party, whatever its name, is the same old opposition, which, like the snake, sheds its skin annually, but at the same time adds a rattle to its tail."[1]

The gauntlet was thrown down by nine anti-organization Democratic members of the legislature of 1857-'58, who met and called a convention of "National Democrats" to meet at Eugene, April 8, for the purpose of nominating candidates for state officers. The nine men signing the call were: Wm. M. King, Multnomah; J. H. Slater, Benton; Nathaniel Ford, Polk and Tillamook; Thos. Scott, Yamhill and Clatsop; F. A. Collard, Geo. Rees and S. P. Gilliland, Clackamas; Wm. Allen and A. Shuck, Yamhill.[2]

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[1] Statesman editorial—"A New Move—The Old Snake in a New Skin." Feb. 2, 1858.

[2] Oregonian, Feb. 6.

"Where 'Nationalism' Tends—Are You Prepared to Go Into the Black Republican Camp?"—was the caption of an editorial in which Bush urged all Democrats to think well before they made up their mind to "leave the old Democratic flag" to join "this National-wool party—this Eugene Negro equality movement."[1] As a matter of fact, some of the most pronounced pro-slavery advocates were numbered among the Nationals and this editorial is an excellent example of Bush's habit of begging the question and befogging the issue, to meet his own purposes. The bitter factional feeling existing among the Democrats is illustrated by the resolutions adopted by the regular Linn county convention and introduced by Delazon Smith, the "Lion of Linn." The Nationals were referred to as "certain malcontents" and "traitors" without honest devotion to principle or sympathy with the Democratic party, who were determined to ruin where they could not rule. Therefore "we utterly repudiate and denounce the miserable, soft faction, self-styled 'National Democrats' * * * We will never again admit them into our confidence as Democrats, until they shall have adopted the ancient mode of purification—washed seven times."[2]

On the other hand, an honest effort was made in some cases to meet the charges of Clique or boss rule, by a more adequate and practical method than that of vilification. In this connection it is exceedingly interesting to note that Clackamas county Democrats inaugurated and carried through a complete system of direct primary nominations in the spring of 1858. It was apparently as thorough an embodiment of the Direct Primary ideal as that so vigorously acclaimed in Oregon a half century later.[3] Naturally, this reaction against close political organization was most pronounced among the opposition. The Clatsop county Republicans declared in convention that "whoever is a loyal partisan, of whatever party, is no patriot." In accordance with this sentiment, they stated that they acknowledged no allegiance to the Republican party, further than it should adhere to its avowed principles.[1] The Yamhill Republicans announced that while believing in the propriety of party organization, they were diametrically opposed to any partisan usage that tended to paralyze the will of the citizens.[2]

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[1] Statesman, March 16.

[2] Ibid.

[3] The plan is outlined in the following resolution: "In order to ascertain the wish of the Democratic voters of Clackamas county, fully, fairly and justly expressed, in relation to all county officers, it is recommended that every Democrat, in a meeting to be held in his precinct, proceed to vote for such nominees as he may prefer to be supported by the Democratic party of this county." Provision is made for transmitting the votes to the chairman of the county committee and for the canvassing of the vote so returned. Those persons obtaining the highest number of votes were to be declared "as the unanimous nominees of the party." Gov. Geo. L. Curry was chairman of the Convention, March 13, which inaugurated the plan. The report of the Clackamas county nominations, given in the Statesman, May 18, shows that the scheme was carried through as planned.

The first Democratic convention for the nomination of state officers met March 16.[3] It reaffirmed the Kansas-Nebraska doctrine of squatter sovereignty in one resolution of its platform and in the next endorsed the Dred Scot decision "as an authoritative and binding exposition!" President Buchanan was warmly endorsed, leaving the inference that he, in his coercive, Lecompton constitution policy in Kansas was to be supported rather than Douglas, who stood out for that "Kansas-Nebraska doctrine" for which the convention so strongly declared! The famous fifth resolution adopted the year before was reaffirmed. The assembled Democrats, to add the cap sheaf to their illogical resolutions, proceeded to "hail with gratification the efforts of the Democratic Administration to initiate the construction of the Pacific Railroad" and earnestly called upon Congress to "exercise all its constitutional powers to forward the geat enterprise of the age."[4] L. F. Grover, a member of the Salem Clique, received the nomination for Congressman, and John Whiteaker, an irreconcilable, proslavery man, was nominated for Governor. Bush, who had been elected from year to year by the legislature as Territorial Printer, was nominated for State Printer. This gave him his first opportunity for personal vindication at the hands of the people, in the face of the attacks made upon him as political autocrat and tyrant.

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[1] Argus, March 20.

[2] Ibid., March 27.

[3] The different party organizations nominated state tickets in the spring of 1858, so that the state government could be put in operation as soon as Congress should pass an act admitting Oregon into the Union. However, members were elected as usual to the Territorial legislature at the June election at the same time that a state legislative assembly was chosen, in view of the fact that Congress might delay action in the matter.

[4] Statesman, March 23.

The platform adopted by the Nationals in their convention at Eugene differed but slightly from that of the Organization, on National issues. However, after endorsing the Administration of President Buchanan, the convention affirmed its belief "in the cardinal principles of popular sovereignty and in the right of the people of the Territories * * * to frame and adopt their constitutions and all local laws for their own government," etc. This could easily be taken as a defense of Douglas in his break with Buchanan over the Lecompton constitution, and it was so charged by Bush.[1] The point of issue between the Oregon Democrats was given in the following resolution: "We reassert the great principles of the right of the represented to instruct the representative and proclaim it the bounden (duty) of the representative to obey the instructions of his constituents or resign whatever position he may at that time hold."[2] This was a direct contradiction of the principles of caucus rule pronounced in the notorious fifth and sixth resolutions of the Democratic platform of 1857. E. M. Barnum was named for Governor. James K. Kelly was nominated for Congressman, and at the same time a resolution was passed endorsing the record of Lane as delegate! This endorsement of Lane by the insurgent wing of the Oregon Democracy, is suggestive of his adroitness in steering clear of factional difficulties and of his continued popularity with Oregon Democrats.

Those who had been looking to the National Democrats to take issue with their opponents on national issues were disappointed. In comment upon their platform, the Argus, which had been accused of "honey-fugling" the Nationals, declared that not a single issue was made with the Salem dynasty upon the great question convulsing the nation, in regard to the right of the people of a Territory to adopt or reject a constitution before it should be fastened upon them by Congress.[3]

The schism in the Democratic party placed the Opposition (Republicans and Whigs) in a new and delicate situation.

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[1] Statesman, April 13.
[2] Oregonian, April 17.
[3] Argus, April 17.

Republican organization which had been started aggressively in 1856, had not been followed up. The Free State Republican convention had been held early in 1857, at which time the principles of the new party had been promulgated, but no Territorial ticket had been nominated and practically no effort had been made to maintain a distinct party organization in the campaign. Dryer's attitude of semi-hostility toward the nascent party had been influential in preventing many Whigs from joining it and it still felt its weakness in numbers. The threats of the Democrats to introduce slavery if the Black Republicans should attempt to abolitionize Oregon led the timid to be conservative as to the expediency of aggressive efforts. With some Republicans, the advocacy of nobly conceived principles was the ruling motive. With others, the controlling ambition was to overthrow the Democratic machine in Oregon. The latter saw their opportunity in 1858 and were in favor of going to the assistance of the National Democrats and of further postponing active Republican organization. These conditions are illustrated in the press and in the proceedings of conventions in the spring of 1858.

In a leader, "What Has Been and What Is to Be," Adams called attention to the surprisingly large vote against slavery in November, 1857, and attributed it to fearless agitation of the subject.[1] And this, despite the warning of the Democrats, which "so intimidated many weak-backed Republicans that they fairly quailed before the imaginary danger of 'agitation' and some of them strongly recommended us to let the Albany convention go by default, even after the call had been published throughout the Territory." Adams accordingly exhorted Republicans to declare themselves boldly, asserting that there was but one great issue before the people; that "there is a bigger fight on hand than the present squabble between Leland[2] and Bush." He clearly manifested his anxiety to prevent Republicans allying themselves with the Nationals, whose principles he declared in the main to be "equally black, equally damnable" with those of the Clique. Perceiving that the National Democratic organization must be temporary, he urged Republicans to "put their house in order and make preparations for comfortably housing those who, after escaping from Babylon, will want a Jerusalem to flee to. Republicans never need look for many deserters from the ranks of the foe as long as they have no more comfortable quarters to invite them into than an area covered by a few slab seats under a fir tree.[1]

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[1] Argus, Dec. 19, 1857.

[2] Editor of the Democratic Standard, the organ of the "soft" or National Democrats. He was succeeded about this time by James O'Meara.

While Dryer had not yet espoused Republicanism, he was as zealous as Adams in efforts to prevent a "coalition with infamy" on the part of the "old line Whigs and all opponents of the bogus Oregon Democracy." He maintained vigorously that the quarrel among the Democrats was entirely a matter of their own, and that they should be left to fight it out in their own way.[2]

The proceedings of the Marion county Republican convention contain much that is suggestive of the situation in 1857-'58 from the Republican standpoint.[3] The preamble to the resolutions referred to "a considerable number of professed Republicans who have been and are opposed to the organization of an Oregon Republican party and who have by their influence thus far prevented any general organization." It was declared to be worse than useless to wait or hope for any advantage to be gained by the schism among the Democrats, and a thorough organization was demanded. Early in March the Yamhill Republicans declared [illegible] favor of the nomination of a state ticket and recommended that the approaching convention nominate such candidates as *can* and *will* boldy go before the people in support of Republican principles.

The Republican state convention met at Salem April 2. In the platform adopted the first several resolutions dealt with the Kansas question and denounced the pro-slavery action of the Administration. The Dred Scott decision, "which makes the Constitution a grand title instrument to every holder of slaves," was stigmatized as a disgrace to the judiciary of the Nation and a stain upon the national character. Locally, the Democratic doctrine of caucus sovereignty was repudiated as dangerous and anti-Republican. Likewise, the Viva Voce voting system, subjecting the suffrage of the citizen to the surveillance of partisan inspectors, was condemned as a relic of barbarism which found fit friends in a party whose whole organization was devoted to the extinguishment of every spark of personal freedom.[1] The ticket nominated was as follows: Congressman, J. R. McBride, Yamhill; Governor, John Denny, Marion; Secretary of State, Leander Holmes, Clackamas; Treasurer, E. L. Applegate, Umpqua; Printer, D. W. Craig, Clackamas, who was associated with Adams in the publication of the Argus.

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[1] Argus, March 6, 1858.
[2] Oregonian, Feb. 13, Feb. 20.
[3] Proceedings, in Oregonian, April 3.

In commenting upon the convention Dryer characterized "this Republican movement" as premature and unwise.[2] He charged a few men in and about Oregon City with having originated it, and with having called the convention "without the knowledge and consent of those who have a right to *advise at least* in matters of this kind. * * * Now, these men will have to elect *their* ticket, if elected at all." Personal pique at being ignored by the presumptive Republican leaders, combined with a feeling of jealousy over the ascendancy of the Argus with the new party, is clearly recognized in Dryer's attitude. Furthermore, his name had been unsuccessfully used in the convention in the nomination of Congressman. He declared the whole movement was conceived in error by those restless minds who lacked the all important element necessary to ensure political triumph over the Salem dynasty. With three tickets in the field, each bidding for Whig support as the heir of the Whig party, the Oregonian entered an eloquent protest. "Do not bury us until we are dead," said the irreconcilable Whig editor. "Let *us* say when we are dead." In an editorial—"To Oregonians who Love Their Country More than Party"—he sounded the last clarion call to Whigs to hold their ground.[3]

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[1] Proceedings in Oregonian, April 10.

[2] Oregonian, April 10.

[3] "Have the principles . . . of the Whig party ceased to exist? We think not. . . . What though the organization of the old Whig party be broken up—its principles still live. . . . Is John J. Crittenden, the gallant standard bearer, left alone? Have you all deserted him? . . . Have you denied the faith? Are you willing, do you wish to lose your political identity? Will you sell your birthright for a mess of pottage? Shame! Shame!"—Oregonian editorial, April 17, addressed to Whigs.

The political situation in the campaign of 1858 is confusing. For, while many issues were declared, the one real issue was —who should have the offices?[1] Should the Salem Clique continue to dominate Oregon politics? Hence, any attempt to explain the political alignments in the light of national issues then before the people leads to confusion. The regular Democratic ticket was referred to as the pro-savery ticket by the enemies of the Clique. True, it was headed by Whiteaker, an avowed slavery man, and the "hards" strongly upheld Buchanan in his Kansas policy. However, in interpreting the Dred Scott decision, Bush and other leaders of the "hards" were more conservative than some of the opposition Democrats, represented by the Occidental Messenger, which held that even a state did not have the right to keep slavery out of its borders. In fact, the members of the Clique were understood to be free state men. Nevertheless, the "hards" applied indiscriminately the epithet "Black Republican" to the "soft" Democrats. Both free state and pro-slavery Democrats were found co-operating with the maligned "freedom shriekers" for the purpose of beating the Organization. Bush charged the Messenger or "Avery's Ox," with being as silent as death on the subject of slavery and Black Republicans during the campaign, for the reason that Avery was running for office and wanted Republican support. But he showed that after the election the latter again took up the cause of slavery and restored the prefix "Black" to his erstwhile friends, the Republicans.[2]

But Bush certainly had very little ground for charging anyone with inconsistency in this campaign. He was at heart, and had been openly, an enthusiastic supporter of Douglas and his policies. But with the break between Douglas and Buchanan, the Oregon Democracy espoused the latter and political patronage, as illustrated in the platform adopted. Bush, wishing to retain the lucrative job of public printer, quietly accepted the Buchanan, Lecompton platform and had no word to say in defense of his friend Douglas during the campaign. It was in reference to this campaign that Delazon Smith, in speaking later of Bush, said he "packed the dumb dog over the state and barked for him because he couldn't bark for himself."[1] Bush had praised the state platform unstintedly, declaring that there was not a word too much or too little in it and that the confidence expressed in the wisdom and integrity of Buchanan was fully merited.[2]

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[1] M. P. Deady, correspondence to San Francisco Bulletin, dated April 20, 1864.

[2] Statesman, June 29.

Lane, alarmed at the prospect of Democratic discord in Oregon and at its probable relations to his political fortunes, made plain what he considered the paramount issue to be. In an open letter to the Statesman,[3] he said: "Fellow Democrats of Oregon, division in the Democratic party will not do. * * * Shall Oregon come into the Union under the auspices of a sectional organization or shall she come in to strengthen the hands of the Constitution and the Union? * * * All Democrats should bear in mind that the Democratic party is the Union." He appealed to the Democracy to bury all private animosities and sacrifice ill feelings and heart burnings on the altar of the public good and to unite as one man in support of the regular nominees.

On May 21, preceding the June election, the Republican candidates for Congressman, Governor and Secretary of State publicly withdrew from the race, leaving the contest to be settled between the "hard" and "soft" factions of the Democrats. The majority of the counties had put out Republican tickets and adopted aggressive platforms. But Holmes, one of the retiring candidates, complained that too many Republicans counted their work done when the nominations were made. The candidates, in their withdrawal, said the organization for the campaign was incomplete and defective and not calculated to inspire success. Hence they thought better to retire than to make a poor showing of Republican strength, waiting to draw the issue at a more propitious time. The Argus deprecated their action but made the best of it, asserting that every Republican agreed that thereafter the Republican ticket must be adhered to in full every year until victory should be achieved.[1]

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[1] "Delazon barked against Douglas, barked for Buchanan and barked for Lecompton and Dred Scott, giving an opportunity at the close of his speech for his 'candidate' to get down, wiggle his tail and whine an endorsement of what had been said, which he always did with relish."—Argus, Dec. 27, '62.

[2] Statesman, March 23.

[3] Quoted in Oregonian, May 1.

The inevitable result was a more or less complete coalition between the Republicans and the National Democrats. The Argus of June 5 made the statement that in Clackamas and Yamhill counties the National Democratic candidates repudiated their own platform, accepting that of the Republicans. In a few counties, the Republican organization was kept intact and the three tickets were voted upon. As far as observable, in those counties where the "hards" lost, it was the "softs" which won. Washington county, which elected a Republican ticket, was an exception. Republican organization had for the time largely disintegrated in the face of the general desire to help overthrow Bush and the Salem Clique.

The election was a victory of organization over disorganization, the "hards" winning by very comfortable margins. But while Grover was elected Congressman by a majority of 1,669 and Whiteaker Governor by 1,138, Bush was victor over his nearest competitor, James O'Meara, by a bare 400 votes. The combined opposition secured the election of eleven members of the state legislature. The strongholds of the Opposition proved to be in Benton, Multnomah, Douglas and Yamhill counties.

Following the election, Adams made some very plain statements in a leader—"To the Republicans of Oregon."[2] Beginning with, "You now see that this election, like all that have preceded it, has been a perfect failure," he pointed out that the Republican party, instead of having consolidated itself by a thorough organization in every county, had lost ground. This, by listening to the counsels of "old pitchers in" who had long been "beating the Clique" whenever they saw a good opening to slip themselves into office between two factions.

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[1] Argus, May 22.
[2] Ibid, June 12.

"We have seen enough of the rottenness and recklessness of demagogues in this campaign to satisfy us that the most deadly hostility to the Republican party may be looked for hereafter from adventurers, who, while they are terrible on the Clique, are determined that any opposition to it shall be so shaped as to secure their own personal preferment. * * * We trust the friends of sound principles will hereafter listen to no proposals for a 'Clique-beating party' upon a rotten platform. If we are beaten, let us be honorably beaten." A good share of this was evidently intended for Dryer who had opposed Republican organization and who had secured election to the legislature. Early in the campaign the Oregonian had attacked Adams viciously as a self-confessed dictator who had put out the Republican state ticket on his own responsibility.[1]

The Constitution which had been adopted provided that the newly-elected state legislature should convene on the first Monday in July, and proceed to elect two United States Senators and make such further provision as should be necessary to the complete organization of the state government.[2] Accordingly, the legislature met July 5 and elected Lane and Delazon Smith as Oregon's first senators. Lane received 46 votes, every "National" Democratic member joining their enemies, the "hards," in supporting him. Smith received 39 votes, the strength of the Organization in the assembly. Five of the seven "soft" members joined the three Republican members in voting for David Logan, against Smith.[3] A few acts were passed which were not to become operative until Congress should admit Oregon into the Union.

Shortly before this special session of the legislative assembly, the United States Senate had passed the bill for the admission of the state of Oregon. Lane, in writing from Washington to Bush in the interest of his candidacy for the senate, announced the Senate's action and indicated clearly that there was no question at all of the passage of the bill in the house. But Congress adjourned without conferring statehood upon

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[1] Oregonian, April 24.

[2] Article 18, section 6, Constitution of Oregon.

[3] Proceedings, in Argus, July 17.

Oregon. The fact soon became known that Lane had done practically nothing toward securing favorable action in the house. No satisfactory explanation of his strange attitude could be had. Oregon Democracy was surprised, disappointed and chagrined. Popular adulation of the idolized leader, who had just been honored by Democracy's unanimous vote for United States Senator, began to give way to doubt and suspicion. His attitude was attributed to ulterior motives.

It has been pointed out that the relations between Lane and the Clique had never been cordial.[1] Especially was this true between Lane and Bush, as the private correspondence between the various leaders clearly shows.[2] But a public break between them did not take place until in December, 1858. In a long editorial, "Why the State was not Admitted," Bush attacked Lane for his inaction, intimating that Lane, fearing he might not be elected Senator, was not anxious to have the Territorial government superseded, under which he had an unexpired term to fill out as delegate. He declared that there was no room for doubt that Oregon's delegate had proven unfaithful and false to his trust.[3] From this time on the Statesman bitterly attacked Lane.[4] And as Delazon Smith, who, with Congressman-elect Grover, had gone on to Washington, took sides with his colleague, he came in with Lane for a full share of abuse. Contributed articles in the Statesman indicate that the feeling against Lane was general and that the Democrats were losing faith in his devotion to the interests of Oregon as above his own personal interests.

The difficulties of the Oregon Democracy in 1858 in finding and maintaining a status, in harmony with conditions at Washington, demand more than the passing notice already given. The Democratic policy was to evade expression on any issue which might threaten the unity and harmony of the party organization. It has been seen how such unity was endangered by the rise of the slavery question in Oregon and by the Dred Scott decision. Further trouble was encountered in the attempt to maintain harmony in the face of the disagreement between President Buchanan and Douglas over the Lecompton constitution in Kansas. The reflection of this controversy is first found in Oregon in January, 1858.[1] In February Bush expressed his opinion privately in favor of Douglas' position.[2] Publicly, he approached the question very gingerly and in the Statesman did his best to belittle and smooth away the apparent discord between the two national Democratic leaders. "There is no difference between the President and Mr. Douglas in matter of any vital principle involved," he declared.[3] After epitomizing Buchanan's contentions, he said, "Mr. Douglas denies all these conclusions and raises issues of fact tending to vitiate their basis." This was as near as Bush came in 1858 to supporting Douglas with whom he was in sympathy. Having summed up the situation diplomatically, he added the words of paternal admonition, "We cannot encourage our (Oregon) Democracy to turn much attention to this subject until it shall assume more tangible shape or involve some more important principle."

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[1] Supra, pages 83, 84, 106.

[2] "Lane didn't get anything allowed me for that 2nd volume of statutes—says Black Republicans prevented him. Likely, I reckon he thinks it best to keep that suspended over my head to 'hold the wretch in order.' Well, let it hang. 'Who's afeard' "?—Letter, Bush to Deady, Oct. 11, 1856.

[3] Statesman, Dec. 21.

[4] The Democratic Crisis, Feb. 9, 1859 attributed Bush's sudden attack on Lane to the fact that the latter did not secure the passage of a bill introduced in Congress for the relief of Bush to the extent of $6000 for printing the statutes of Oregon.

The Linn county Democrats, whose declarations in conventions were generally those of the Democratic orator and leader, Delazon Smith, asserted that the Kansas difficulty could never rise to the dignity of a national issue; that they regarded the difference of opinion between President Buchanan and Senator Douglas as "both honest and courteous"; that "members of the Democratic party may everywhere differ in opinion to the same extent and upon the same subject, without impairing their standing as Democrats."[1] But by the time the state convention assembled, the prestige of the Administration made itself felt, with the result of the aforementioned endorsement of Buchanan and his policies. As the campaign progressed the support of President Buchanan became more and more cordial and pronounced. Douglas was completely deserted. The Lane county Democrats, not content with a general hearty endorsement of the administration of "our present patriotic and distinguished Chief Magistrate," singled out for special commendation, "that policy pertaining to the admission of Kansas."

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[1] "Jo Lane's Times which had just committed itself and the Oregon Democracy to the Douglas and Walker horn of the Kansas swindle, has changed its coat since Jo Lane has sent in his instructions, and came out last Saturday with a flaming endorsement of Buchanan's plan of subjugating Kansas, although it still contends that the Constitution should have been submitted to the people of Kansas."—Argus, Jan. 30.

[2] "As to the position of Buchanan and Douglas they are both right in one sense. I think Douglas' position is undeniably correct. . . . But the conduct of the free state men in Kansas, in refusing to vote for delegates to the Constitutional Convention, leaves them without much right to complain and I am not certain but that I would vote for the Lecompton Constitution if I was in Congress."—Letter, Bush to Deady, Feb. 12, 1858.

[3] Statesman, March 2.

But before the end of the year Oregon Democracy began to experience a change of heart. Dryer wrote from Salem in December, when the last Territorial legislature was in session, that those who had been loudest in denouncing Douglas and lauding Buchanan were now pronouncing eulogies upon the former and "cursing both loud and deep Old Buck as a humbug and knave." He attributed the sudden conversion solely and entirely to the Illinois election, which had "produced a change almost equal to that of Pentecost." Dryer proceeded with a picturesque characterization of the Oregon Democracy[2] and also predicted the open break between Bush and Lane which occurred that very month.

Though a state constitution had been adopted, state officers elected, a state legislature held, United States Senators chosen and the new Governor inaugurated, Oregon remained a Territory. Lane advised the people of Oregon to proceed under the auspices of the state government just as though Congress had admitted the Territory as a state. He recommended the holding of the regular session of the state legislature in September in accordance with the schedule of the Constitution. Such semi-defiant procedure was vigorously opposed by the Statesman. The assembly-elect followed the lead of Bush and the September session was not held, though an abortive attempt was made to organize the session, on the part of the Opposition members.

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[1] Proceedings, in Statesman, March 16.

[2] "Democracy in Oregon means devotion to the personal interests of Asahel Bush. . . . It means that you must relish the egotism as well as the Toryism of D——y [Deady] and commend the recreancy of B——E [Boise] the Massachusetts Whig and laugh immoderately at the obscenity of "Nes" [Nesmith] and down on your belly at their bidding where you must crawl, meekly looking up and eating any quantity of dirt that is set before you."—Oregonian, Dec. 18.

Hence, the Territorial legislature which had been elected in June as a precautionary measure, at the same time that the state assembly was elected, was called to meet in December. The same question relative to the protection of slave property, that had embroiled the session of the preceding year, was now again introduced. A comparison of the discussions of the two sessions is interesting as showing the advanced ground which had been taken by certain Democrats in the interim relative to the rights of slavery in the Territories.

The "petitions of several citizens of Oregon praying for the passage of a law for the protection of slave property in Oregon"[1] were referred to the judiciary committee of the house. The majority report, signed by W. W. Chapman, chairman, and W. G. T'Vault, held that the Constitution guaranteed equal rights to all property holders in the Territories, including slave owners. And further, that "when Congress does organize a Territorial government that the Constitution guarantees to the inhabitants the right to legislate, and regulate the manner how any person shall have his property protected."[2] Hence the committee introduced a bill containing the following provisions: First, that those who had brought slaves into the Territory, should have all the rights and remedies in the several courts of the Territory, which were allowed for the protection and recovery of any other personal property of like value. Second, that those knowingly harboring or employing a slave without consent of the owner should be subject to a forfeit of five dollars per day to the owner. Third, that slaves should be rated and assessed to owners like any other property. Fourth, that any master or owner of a boat carrying a slave out of the Territory or to any point in the Territory without the consent of the owner, should forfeit the value of the same to the latter.

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[1] Proceedings, Oregonian, Jan. 22, 1859.

[2] Ibid., Jan. 15.

Two minority reports were returned from the committee. One was by N. H. Cranor of Marion, who had taken an important part in the discussion on the same question a year previous, at which time he had held that slavery was excluded from Oregon by the act of Congress organizing the Territory.[1] Now, he held that as the Territories were property of the General Government, the citizens of all sections had equal rights therein; that neither Congress nor the Territories, under the Dred Scott decision, had power to legislate upon the question of slavery in the Territories. Hence, the legislation petitioned for was impossible and was also useless, as by the decision of the Supreme Court, slavery was already protected in the Territories and needed no special legislation. One year before, Cranor had taken just the opposite position. He presents a good example of the rapid intellectual development of good Democrats whose chief object was to adjust their ideas to the constitutional doctrine of the Administration.

The other minority report was presented by E. D. Shattuck, a Republican, representing Washington and Multnomah. He reviewed at length the Republican doctrine on the question, declaring that that part of the Scott decision affecting the question at issue was gratuitous and had not the force of law; that under its organic act, the Territorial legislature had power to legislate upon the subject in the negative only. In short, Cranor held that a Territorial legislature could take no action; Chapman and T'Vault that it could take action, but only affirmatively; Shattuck that it could take action, but only negatively.

Action was not taken upon the majority report until near midnight of the last day of the session, when, with a small attendance present, it was adopted by a vote of 13 to 9. This was the action of the house only, and of course the negro bill introduced was abortive. However, it is an interesting fact that such a bill was actually introduced and rather heartily supported. And that too, after the people of Oregon, in accordance with the Democratic doctrine of popular sovereignty, had decided against slavery by a vote approximately five to one.

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[1] Supra, page 125.

PART III

THE PERIOD OF STATE GOVERNMENT—CIVIL WAR PERIOD

CHAPTER IX

POLITICAL MANEUVERING IN 1859

The statement has been made that no state, not of the original thirteen, has contributed so materially as Oregon in the circumstances of its acquisition and territorial organization to the great national issues which have divided the country.[1] Whether the statement is literally true or not, it forcefully suggests what is apt generally to be overlooked—the close, vital relation of isolated Oregon to the great issues which have stirred the whole nation. It is not the purpose here to dwell upon this interesting phase, further than to suggest the relation of the admission of Oregon—as a Territory in 1848 and as a state in 1859—to the development of the national issue of slavery.

In 1848 the organization of the Territory had been opposed by the pro-slavery element in Congress. In the struggle over the Oregon bill, occasioned by the anti-slavery provision, Calhoun laid down the principles which were thereafter to be maintained by the South and on which the policy of the National Democracy was to be based. He declared that the territories were the common property of the people of the United States and that as a result the South was entitled to the same property rights therein as the North. Ten years later Oregon was knocking for admission to the Union as a free state. This time the opposition arose from the anti-slavery element in Congress, the Oregon bill being championed by the regular Democratic organization. In the first place it was not considered strictly a party question. In 1857 the lower house of Congress had passed an act authorizing the people of Oregon to organize a state government, but Congress adjourned before action was taken by the Senate. In May, 1858, the Senate passed a bill by a vote of 35 to 17 to admit Oregon, with the constitution which had in the meantime been adopted. Eleven Republican senators were among the 35 and six among the 17.

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[1] Hon. Frederick N. Judson, St. Louis, Mo., in anniversary address commemorating admission of Oregon to the Union. See Proceedings, p. 33.

Among the minority were some of the radical Southern senators including Jefferson Davis, who were opposed to the admission of any more northern states. The leader of the eleven Republicans who favored admission was Wm. H. Seward.[1] As has been suggested, the first session of this the 35th Congress came to a close without action having been taken by the lower house.[2]

The action of the rabid, pro-slavery Southern senators in opposing the admission bill, made it plain that the Administration Democrats could not command the full party vote in support of the bill. The Republicans, whose numbers had been steadily increasing in Congress and who were anxious to make their influence felt, now found in the Oregon question the eagerly awaited opportunity to exhibit their party strength. Various reasons for their opposition to the admission bill were publicly stated by the Republicans. Oregon's population was not sufficient to entitle her to statehood. The same requirements should be made of Oregon which had been prescribed for Kansas. Some criticism of the constitution was indulged in. But these were not the real sources of opposition. Oregon gave promise of being a Democratic state—had in fact already elected Democratic senators and congressman—and her admission would materially increase the strength of that party in Congress. It was, moreover, already conceded that the approaching presidential election would be closely contested and Oregon might turn the scale the wrong way—from the Republican viewpoint. The sincerity of the people of Oregon in adopting a free-state constitution under which discrimination was made against free Negroes, and furthermore in electing a recognized pro-slavery advocate in Lane to the Senate, was questioned. The strength of the pro-slavery element in Oregon was known and feared. Furthermore, there was a desire on the part of the Republicans to retaliate upon the

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[1] Franklin P. Rice, "Eli Thayer and the Admission of Oregon" in the Worcester (Mass.) Magazine for February and March, 1906, republished in "Proceedings of the 50th Anniversary of the Admission of the State of Oregon to the Union." Mr. Rice gives a concise, lucid account of the situation, based upon the records of Congress and the newspapers of the period, and his account has here been closely followed.

[2] Supra, pages 138, 139.

Democrats for their refusal to admit Kansas. Influenced by these various motives, the Republican organization in Congress, encouraged by such prominent Republicans as Horace Greeley, determined to test its strength against the Administration forces by opposing the Oregon bill.

Accordingly, when, in January, of the second session of this Congress, the bill for the admission of Oregon was reported in the house, the Republican policy of opposition was declared. But when the party managers undertook to rally the full Republican strength against the bill,—they encountered serious defection in the ranks. Fifteen Republicans, led by Eli Thayer of Massachusetts, refused to regard the Oregon bill as a party measure, which it had really now become. The most strenuous efforts were made to enforce party discipline upon them but in vain. Viewing the question upon its own merits, they declared that the people of Oregon had proceeded in accordance with the accustomed usages, had acted in good faith and were entitled to statehood. Hence they voted for the bill, with the Administration forces, as opposed to the Republican organization and the Southern extremists. On February 12, 1859, the house passed the bill by a vote of 114 to 108 and two days later the President affixed his signature. Oregon was at last a state and the eager hopes of a decade were realized.

The passage of the admission bill seemed to reinstate Lane partially with Oregon Democrats, though not with Bush and the Clique with whom the break was irrevocable. The general attitude toward Lane is reflected in the actions of the county Democratic conventions held in the spring of 1859. The Polk county Democrats declared that they would not aid in building up a personal party for any man, no matter what his present position and future prospects might be. They demanded a strict adherence to the doctrine of rotation in office.[1] On the other hand, the Clackamas Democrats viewed "with pride and renewed confidence the continuous and untiring zeal of our fellow-citizen, the Hon. Jos. Lane, in his efforts to secure the highest good of Oregon and we believe that but for his personal efforts in our behalf, Oregon would now be in Territorial vassalage." In harmony with this resolution, the Statesman was condemned for its assaults upon distinguished members of the Democratic party.[1] Similar action supporting Lane was taken by Josephine, Multnomah and Linn county, though in some cases by a bare majority vote.[2]

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[1] Statesman, April 12, 1859.

The break between Lane and the Clique gave the Nationals or "soft" faction of the party their opportunity. As has been shown, they remained steadfast in their loyalty to Lane and they now began to rally round him as their champion against the Clique. The leadership of Lane gave them that political legitimacy which was so essential. They were no longer political pariahs. In fact they began looking forward at once to securing, through the prestige of Lane, the control of the regular party machinery. The return of the Nationals to the regular organization was hailed with satisfaction by several county conventions and by the following resolution adopted by the state convention: "We approve and rejoice over that thorough and harmonious unison of the party which has displaced past differences and given assurances of future united action." As the Nationals were in control of the convention, however, the "approval" was easily understood and there was a lurking suspicion of irony in the reference to the harmonious unison of the party.

The Democratic state convention met on April 20 at Salem. It was the first convention in which the Lane forces and the Clique had been in open opposition. A trial of strength was at once made and the Clique was worsted for the first time. A minority of the committee on resolutions dissented from the report. Thirty votes were cast against the fifth resolution which strongly commended the three Oregon representatives in Congress for their effective work in securing the admission of Oregon.[3] The real test of strength, however, came in the vote for nomination of a Congressman to succeed Grover. Lansing

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[1] Statesman, April 19.

[2] Ibid., April 19, April 26.

[3] Proceedings, Statesman, April 26.

Stout, a young Portland attorney who had recently come from California, was nominated by the Lane-Smith faction. Grover, a member of the Clique, was supported by the old organization for renomination. Stout was nominated by a vote of 40 to 33. As to the methods by which this result was achieved, charges and recriminations were many and bitter. Bush charged that Linn county promised to vote for Grover if Marion county would pledge itself to vote for the re-election of Delazon Smith as United States Senator. This was refused, whereupon the opposition to the Clique joined forces in a secret caucus where successful plans for the defeat of Grover were matured. Bush declared that the latter was sacrificed because he had chosen to devote his time and influence at Washington to the interests of his constituents and country rather than to the perpetuation of Gen. Lane in office.[1]

The attitude of the old organization leaders on seeing their factional enemies step in and at once secure control of the party organization may be easily imagined. Bush was furious and made it plain in the Statesman that little help might be expected from him in the campaign. Other members of the Clique were equally irreconcilable.[2] On the other hand, the Nationals were correspondingly jubilant. The expression of the Oregon Weekly Union of Corvallis, edited by Jas. H. Slater, a National, may be regarded as typical of the attitude of the "softs". In reviewing the proceedings of the convention,[3] Slater announced that in the repudiation of the old fifth and sixth resolutions, the principles contended for by the National Democrats were thus triumphant even in the old organization. Believing that a return to correct principles had been effected; that caucus sovereignty had been abandoned and repudiated; that censorship of the Democratic press was not to be continued; that effect was to be given to the voice of the masses in preference to the dicta of a few who had usurped authority, Slater pledged his best efforts to the support of the ticket.

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[1] Editorials in Statesman, April 26, on "Democratic State Convention" and "The Personal Party."

[2] "You have doubtless heard of the damnable outrage perpetrated by Lane and Smith's friends in our mis-called Democratic Convention." (Details given.) "This is a remarkable triumph of caucus sovereignty! I boldly denounced the 'dirty bargain' in the Convention—laid the thing open to public gaze—exposed Stout's Know Nothingism in California."—Nesmith to Deady, April 25.

[3] Oregon Weekly Union, April 23.

Early in the spring the Republicans began organizing with a new determination to establish a permanent and independent party, free from all connection with Democratic factions. As an illustration of what was taking place over the state, a city mass meeting was held at Portland, March 5, "for the purpose of organizing a party which shall be opposed to the present (so-called) Democratic party of Oregon." The resolutions adopted called for the thorough organization of the National Republican party in Oregon; utterly repudiated the doctrines of abolitionism and denied that it constituted any part of the Republican creed; declared unreservedly for the full and free application to the Territories of the doctrine of popular sovereignty.[1] This last resolution indicates the heresy of Oregon Republicanism on the great issue of squatter sovereignty, further evidence of which was to be frequently given.

Among those addressing the meeting was Dryer. In the next issue of the Oregonian he strongly endorsed the meeting and from this time may be considered a Republican. In the spring of 1858 he had denounced the idea of political organization of the opposition as likely to prove as baneful as that of the Salem Clique. But in December he had turned squarely about and urged the necessity of the organization of a political party by the *People of Oregon* as the only remedy for the existing evils under Clique rule.[2] In February, 1859, he referred to the call—made by "W. T. Matlock and four other residents of Clackamas county calling themselves a 'Republican Central Committee' "—for a state convention to be held at Salem, April 21. He could not withhold some insinuations as to the presumption of a few Clackamas county politicians, self-constituted as leaders, but concluded with expressing the hope that the convention would prove successful in organizing the forces against the ruling dynasty.[3] All of which indicated that Dryer was "coming round" gradually. A little later in a leader, "The Republicans!" he speaks of the aggressive work of the Republicans in the several counties, which he gives guarded commendation, and tacitly joins his fortunes with the new party.[1] Thus, after holding aloof for three years, the old Whig veteran now brought the Oregonian to the aid of the Republican cause.

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[1] Oregonian, March 12.
[2] Oregonian, Dec. 4, 1858.
[3] Ibid., Feb. 5, 1859.

The Republican state convention met at Salem on the day following the meeting of the Democrats. The Republicans proceeded with a seriousness of purpose, with a practical determination to achieve results as well as to declare high sounding principles, which had not before characterized them. They now acted as members of a political organization rather than as a mere assembly of reform enthusiasts and political doctrinaires. The resolutions adopted, written by such men as J. R. McBride, T. W. Davenport and Jesse Applegate, were sane, conservative and even conciliating.[2] The strongest devotion to the Union was avowed and anything approaching hatred of any part of it was as strongly disavowed. While announcing unalterable opposition to slavery extension, the right to interfere with institutions existing in the states, was disclaimed. A guarded declaration was made in favor of popular sovereignty, which, though not in accordance with orthodox Republicanism, would tend to mollify aggressive Westerners and would clearly strengthen the party in Oregon. Intervention of Congress for the protection of slavery in the Territories, demanded by leading Democrats, was severely denounced. While declaring for the purity of the ballot box, a welcome was extended to those foreigners who preferred free institutions to despotism. The belief was expressed that the enforcement of the existing naturalization laws was all that was necessary as a barrier against foreign immigration. This set the Republicans clear on the subject of Know Nothingism. The annexation of adjacent territory was favored, by fair and honorable means, with the consent of the governed. The resolutions further declared for a homestead bill, the construction of the Pacific railroad, internal improvements and for a tariff upon imports to meet the current expenses of the government, which should discriminate in favor of home industry. The immediate payment of the Oregon Indian war debt was urged upon Congress.

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[1] Oregonian, Feb. 26.

[2] Proceedings in Statesman, April 26 and in Argus, April 30.

David Logan was nominated for Congress with 32 votes, his nearest competitor being B. J. Pengra of Eugene, editor of a new Republican paper, the People's Press. Dr. W. Warren, Leander Holmes and A. G. Hovey were chosen as delegates to the National Republican convention of 1860, and were instructed to use their influence for W. H. Seward.[1] H. W. Corbett, W. C. Johnson and E. D. Shattuck were elected as a state central committee.

Bush, enraged and disgusted over the results of the Democratic Convention, gave the Republicans unwonted consideration. He stated that Logan was well known throughout the state and was the strongest man that could have been named; that there were some good things in the platform and some "colored" things; but that it was unexpectedly decent to come from such a body as the convention was.[2] In fact, after a week for reflection, Bush began to find fault with the Republican platform because it *was* so mild and inoffensive. He pointed out at once the singular incongruity between the platform and candidate for Congress on the one hand, and the Seward instructions on the other. He said that the platform had no Seward Republicanism in it and that Logan's slavery opinions no more accorded with Seward's than with Garrison's. The opinion was expressed that the platform was three-fourths humbug; that neither it nor the candidate even approached the eastern standard of black Republicanism. Nor did they even represent the anti-slavery opinions of the majority of the convention from which they were sent forth.[1]

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[1] The Seward instructions were slipped through rather surreptitiously near the close of the Convention by Pengra, after many delegates had left. See Argus, Oct. 29, 1859.

[2] Statesman, April 26.

"Logan was nominated by the blacks and Jesse made the best platform that could be constructed out of the materials. I believe he will be elected. The Shannons, English, Cornoyer and all the French are up in arms for Logan." (Referring to the fact that Stout had been a Know Nothing.) "Jo and Ahio Watt are electioneering for Logan in Yamhill so you may know h—— is broke loose."—Nesmith to Deady, April 25.

The Argus, in commenting upon the convention and its results, declared that for the first time in the history of Oregon the issue was now fairly made between the Republicans as the friends of free laborers and the Jo Lane Democracy as the advocates of negro-breeding, negro-extension fanaticism. The first time, because "the blacks", under the management of Lane, had run up their true colors. The 2600 fanatics who had voted for slavery in Oregon had now succeeded in crushing out the free soil element from the Democratic party by throwing Grover, Williams and other free state men overboard;[2] by striking out from their creed "everything that savored of a license for Democrats to favor freedom and take an occasional squint at the North Star." This was the issue which Adams had been impatiently trying to force ever since the establishment of the Argus. "Parson" Adams was no "waiter on Providence." Believing the world to be full of time-crusted error and that he had a special mission to set it to rights, he preferred to lead the forlorn hope and let the slow and conservative masses come limping after him in their own good time, never doubting but that they would come sooner or later.[3] He now entered upon the campaign with aggressiveness and enthusiasm.

The great question of the power of the federal government over slavery in the Territories occupied so important a place in the campaign of 1859 that it is necessary to dwell upon the state of opinion in Oregon upon the national issue. When the doctrine of squatter sovereignty was given official and legal sanction in the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in 1854, the free state men in Oregon were quick to repudiate it. But the spirit of the West—of the self-governing frontiersmen, was too strong. Years before the doctrine of popular sovereignty was enunciated, the Oregon pioneers had established the first American government upon the Pacific Coast solely upon the principles of absolute popular sovereignty. It was the cardinal doctrine in their political creed—in fact it *was* their common creed, before the new country became involved in national politics. When the Democratic party espoused it as a political issue, the Oregon Democrats pushed their favorite doctrine to the extreme, as will be shown. The opposition were thus placed on the defensive, and at first were prompted by the binding force of party loyalty to oppose it, but only in its relation to the slavery question. In all other particulars they were in favor of the people of the Territories managing their own affairs without interference from Washington. The distinction was hard to maintain. Hence, when the pro-slavery Democrats abandoned the ground of squatter sovereignty for that of direct intervention in behalf of slavery, it gave the Oregon Republicans, especially the more conservative ones, the opportunity to espouse the doctrine, in its entirety. There was thus very little difference between them and the Douglas Democrats. It is interesting to note that at a time when allegiance to party doctrines was almost a matter of religion, that inherent desire of the Western pioneers to govern themselves was strong enough to override party barriers on the one question of popular sovereignty. On the other hand, the fact that many Western Democrats saw fit to forsake the popular doctrine suggests how infatuated was their devotion to the cause of the slave power.

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[1] Statesman, May 3.

[2] "We heard one of the most prominent and most active of Lane's supporters from Southern Oregon denounce Williams for writing his free-state letter, and the Salem organ for publishing such 'rotten abolitionism'. The publication of that letter did the work for Williams and the endorsement of it has done the work for many more, and these headless Democrats are now as effectually killed off in the party as though they had joined the Republicans."—Argus, April 30.

[3] Characterization by M. P. Deady in correspondence to the San Francisco Bulletin, dated May 20, 1863.

The typical Western attitude on the question was expressed by Bush in 1857 in an editorial on squatter sovereignty,[1] in which he declared that the principle should be extended to give people in the Territories power over all legislation to the same extent as enjoyed by citizens of the states. "We are just as capable here in Oregon to elect our officers, make our laws unrestricted and in all things govern ourselves, as we were, scattered over the thirty-one states. And we are presuming enough to claim that we of right ought to have the same powers here that we exercised there." In 1858 when the Oregon Democrats supported Buchanan and his Lecompton policy in Kansas, their attitude toward the Douglas doctrine was passive, at best. This made it easy for Dryer to declare his sentiments upon the subject. He stated that he was and always had been in favor of the Kansas-Nebraska doctrine of popular sovereignty and had opposed the Kansas-Nebraska bill merely because it disturbed a long-established and accepted settlement of a difficult problem. He went so far as to declare that he would cheerfully support either Douglas or Crittenden for the presidency upon that issue.[1] Now in 1859, with Lane and the radical, slavery-extension Democrats in control of the party organization, Bush renewed his allegience to Douglas and his doctrines with increased zeal, as if to atone for his apostasy of the previous year. In developing to its last conclusion his favorite doctrine, he declared that the only power which Congress possessed over the Territories by virtue of the Constitution was based upon the "power to dispose of and make all useful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States"; that it conferred no power to legislate for the people of the Territories, to appoint officers over them nor to govern them in any way whatsoever; Congress therefore had no warrant whatever for the existing system of territorial government, yet the people had long submitted in silence to many of the same grievances for which their forefathers threw off the British yoke. "Officers have been imposed upon us without our consent and in direct violation of our will. Our judges have been made dependent upon the will of the President and Senate alone for the tenure of their offices and for the amount and payment of their salaries. The administration of justice has been obstructed by the passage of unjust and unwholesome laws. We have been repeatedly annoyed by the insolence of officials not of our own choosing. And all this without even the semblance of constitutional authority!"[2] What a familiar ring this has to those who have followed at all the proceedings of the old colonial assemblies in pre-revolutionary days! It indicates clearly what the doctrine of popular sovereignty meant to Oregonians.

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[1] Statesman, March 17, 1857.

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[1] Oregonian, May 8, 1858.
[2] Statesman, March 1, 1859.

The State Democratic platform of 1859 stated that the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case was acknowledged by the Democratic party as a correct interpretation of the Constitution on the question of slavery. This was a palpable evasion as there were no less than three distinct interpretations of that decision among the Democrats. The Douglas phase of the doctrine, that of absolute non-intervention, was still very generally held by the rank and file of the Oregon democracy. Many, however, were now following the lead of Lane, who maintained that slavery existed in the Territories by virtue of the Constitution and that the people of the Territories had no authority either to establish it or prohibit its introduction. Bush hence charged him with having deserted the Democratic principle of popular sovereignty and with having taken up "the quibble devised by some place-seeking demagogues, to cheat unthinking Southern extensionists."[1] Lane had merely advanced to the Buchanan or Administration interpretation, but Bush refused to recognize the latter as Democratic doctrine. The radical Democratic position was voiced by Editor O'Meara in the Standard, who declared for positive intervention by Congress for the protection of slavery in the Territories. He charged that whoever held a different doctrine was a Black Republican. He attacked Douglas for his Freeport speech doctrine, as either a demagogue or "a very thick-headed numbskull," charging him with utterances treasonable and subversive of the Constitution.[2]

In the campaign, Lansing Stout, the Democratic candidate for Congressman, supported the Administration doctrine and even approached that of the interventionists, maintaining that the people were obliged to enact laws for the protection of slaves in the Territories. He was supported on the stump by Smith and Lane, who spent most of their time in denouncing the Statesman and defending themselves. Bush carried Stout's name at the head of the ticket in the Statesman. He did nothing for his election, however, merely damning him with faint praise—very faint, indeed. Almost the entire editorial space of the Statesman was devoted to the detraction and defamation of Smith and Lane, vituperative and scurrilous to the last degree; especially when directed against Delazon Smith, or "Delusion" Smith, as he was universally referred to by his political enemies. This tendency of Oregon journalism towards the Billingsgate, which had always been pronounced and which became known as the "Oregon Style," reached its height, or rather, depth, during this period.

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[1] Statesman, editorial, "Then and Now", Nov. 22, 1859.
[2] Quoted in Argus, May 28.

David Logan was a very conservative Republican, to say the least. He could almost as truly be termed a Douglas Democrat. But he was the logical candidate to run upon the Republican platform adopted in April. It had declared for popular sovereignty, "in deference to the prevailing public sentiment" as Bush said,[1] and Logan, in harmony with a few independent Republicans like Eli Thayer, was a hearty supporter of the doctrine, which he now freely proclaimed. In this he was strongly supported by the Oregonian which declared that the Republican party of Oregon stood firmly pledged to non-intervention.[2] It is not to be presumed that this positio[illegible]he question was pleasing to all the Republicans of t[illegible], by any means. A very different class of men rallied round the Republican standard in 1858 and 1859, from those who had set up that standard in the Territory, and who for their devotion to the cause of human freedom had been known by the inelegant but expressive term—"dam-Black Republican." The growing success of the party in the East, *and* the admission of Oregon to statehood, which would bring Oregon Republicans in direct connection with the National organization, was exerting a decisive influence. Many, who had taken no active interest in the great moral issues at stake, seeing an opportunity to aid in the defeat of the Democratic party and to advance their own fortunes, political and otherwise, now "rallied to the party conventions and were active participants therein, as though they were native to the manor born."[1] With these, party success was more important than unwavering allegiance to some abstract principle. It must not be inferred, however, that the later accessions to the party were actuated solely by personal and mercenary motives. Many of those who had been associated with the beginnings of Republicanism in Oregon might almost be termed professional reformers. They had aided in the temperance movement, had been identified with Knownothingism, abolitionism and had advocated various doctrines regarded by the public at large as visionary and fanatical. This explains to some degree the extent to which the early Republicans had been maligned. Their very zeal caused them to be mistrusted. It was the anxious purpose of the Republicans in 1859 to free themselves from all stigma of fanaticism, and to inspire confidence in themselves as statesmen rather than to incur suspicion as doctrinaires. This did not mean necessarily a desertion of Republican principles. It did imply a re-statement of them and some readjustment, as on the question of popular sovereignty. It is from this general situation that the conservative, semi-orthodox attitude of the Oregon Republicans in 1859, must be viewed. Dryer, who was a good example of the second edition Republicans, gave apt expression to their viewpoint in the following: "There are a large number of people possessed of a kind of night-mare upon this question of slavery. This class is composed both of the ultraists for and the ultraists against slavery. Each branch of this class seems to have set up a Congo Negro as a fit subject or idol of their worship. We are none of this class and we speak for the Republican party of Oregon by authority, when we say that they do not compose either branch of this class."[2]

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[1] Statesman, Aug. 2.
[2] Oregonian, Aug. 6.

The election resulted in almost a political revolution. The issue was long in doubt and when finally determined it was found that Stout had been elected by a bare majority of 16 votes. With the Democrats in charge of the machinery of election, this was indeed a narrow margin. The result was astounding to both parties. Marion county, the seat of the government and of the Salem Clique, which normally might have been expected to give Stout a majority of some 500 votes, gave Logan 782 majority. Bush declared that he voted for Stout, but admitted that he did not give him the earnest, active support that he would have done had he been regularly and fairly nominated. He attributed the decreased Democratic vote to lukewarmness on the part of many old Democrats, due to Stout's former active connection with the Know Nothing party in California. Particularly was that the case in Marion county in which there was a large foreign vote. On the other hand, Logan's espousal of popular sovereignty made it easy for many Douglas Democrats to support him. It was only by the Democratic steadfastness of the isolated southern counties that the great defection was overcome and Stout's election secured.

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[1] Davenport, in Oregon Historical Quarterly for December, 1908, p. 334.
[2] Oregonian, Aug. 6.

Out of the sacrifice of Grover at the Democratic convention in April by the Lane faction, there grew a political vendetta among the Democrats. As a result there was no election of United States senator at the special session of the legislature called in May to complete the details of state organization. Smith had drawn the short term which had expired on the adjournment of Congress, within a month after he and Lane had been sworn in. He had been in Washington during the winter, however, and had thoroughly identified himself with Lane in the growing strife between the latter and the Clique. He apparently entered upon a life of dissipation in Washington, lurid stories of which found their way back to Oregon to be given full publicity by Smith's enemies, particularly by Bush in the Statesman. Smith made a desperate effort for reelection at the May special session, with the apparent support of Lane, whose good faith toward his colleague and ally was questioned. Though Smith was himself discredited and unable to secure re-election, the factions in the legislature seemed evenly enough divided so that the Lane-Smith forces could probably have prevented the election of a member of the opposing faction. At any rate, the Democrats were not disposed to force the issue at this time by opening up the struggle and chose to allow the seat in the Senate to remain vacant until the regular session of the next legislature in 1860.

At the State Democratic Convention in April, when the Lane faction by its secret caucus captured the organization, it secured control of the state central committee. The committee met at Eugene, September 24, and issued a call for a state convention to be held at Eugene, November 16, to elect delegates to the National Democratic Convention to be held at Charleston the coming year. A split occurred in the committee over the choice of a basis of representation on which delegates to the Convention should be chosen. The Lane forces were in the majority and voted that the representation be based upon the Democratic vote for Stout in the late election. This was in accordance with past procedure. It would now prove favorable to Lane as it would very materially diminish the number of delegates from the Willamette Valley counties, where opposition to him was pronounced, and increase the number from the southern counties which remained loyal to him. The Bush or Salem faction maintained that this basis disfranchised two thousand Democrats who had constantly battled for Democratic principles "both before and since the late Democratic candidate proved recreant to those principles by a desertion to the secret conclave of an oath-bound enemy." Accordingly the minority, demanding representation upon the basis of the vote cast for Whiteaker for governor in 1858, withdrew and issued a separate call to the Democracy of Oregon in which they asked the counties to send delegates to the Eugene convention on this basis. In this action they were upheld and supported by the Statesman.

The reasons for Lane's special anxiety to secure control of the Eugene convention lay in his ambition to be named on the national ticket to be nominated at Charleston. As early as 1852 he was an active candidate for the nomination of president of the United States and received no little encouragement.[1] From that time on he had been at least a willing, receptive candidate and he now became a very active one. He was a bombastic, self-assertive man, and was a born leader, which made him a success as a General or a politician. He had not the capabilities or training of a statesman and his speeches on the issues of the day were composed largely of generalities and platitudes. But recognizing no limitation to his abilities, he placed no limitations on his ambitions. Depending first on his successful military record as the "Marion of the Mexican War", and as the hero of a number of Indian fights in the far West, and second upon his standing with his party and especially the pro-slavery element of it, he entered the field for national honors. Of course the first requisite of success was to secure the endorsement of his own state. This would have been easy enough a few years previous—for instance, when, after his decisive victory over Gaines in 1855, Bush had carried the legend in the Statesman, "Gen. Joseph Lane for President in 1856."[1] But with the Oregon Democracy divided into two hostile camps, Lane faced a difficult situation in 1859.

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[1] In the collection of Lane letters in the possession of the Oregon Historical Society are to be found scores of private letters addressed to Lane in reference to his candidacy in 1852 and chances of success. Most of these are from politicians of his home state, Indiana, but several other states are also represented.

The Lane-Stout faction was in control of the Eugene Convention. The committee on credentials reported in favor of decreasing the size of the delegations of certain counties which were based on the vote for Whiteaker, in accordance with the recommendation made by the minority of the state central committee. For example, the size of the Marion county delegation was thus cut from ten to four members.[2] Upon the adoption of the report, Grover arose and said: "I am authorized by eight counties here to say to the convention on behalf of those counties, that they retire from the convention upon this decision." All the delegates from Marion, Polk, Wasco, Clatsop, Washington, Umpqua, Coos and Curry counties then retired. They immediately assembled in another room where they resolved that inasmuch as they did not represent the majority of the counties in the state, they would not elect delegates to the Charleston convention, but pledged the Democracy of the several counties represented, to a cordial support of the National Democratic nominee.

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[1] Supra, page 74.

[2] Proceedings, Statesman, Nov. 22.

After the withdrawal of the eight counties from the convention, a committee of one member from each remaining county, reported the names of Lane, M. P. Deady, and Stout as delegates to the national convention. The committee on resolutions, on which was L. F. Mosher, son-in-law of Lane, reported the following: "Resolved—That we recommend to the consideration of the Charleston Convention as a candidate for the office of chief magistrate, our distinguished fellow citizen, the Hon. Gen. Joseph Lane, and our delegates are instructed to use their best efforts to secure his nomination for the office of President or Vice President, and that we pledge the Democracy of the state to support cordially the nominee of the Charleston Convention, whoever he may be." In this manner, through resolutions, did Mosher very cleverly get a "unanimous" declaration for Lane, in the face of the fact that even of the eleven counties which remained after the bolt, Josephine and Clackamas had instructed for Douglas for President; Yamhill for Dickinson and Benton had voted down a Lane resolution. As far as the published proceedings of the various county conventions show, only Lane, Douglas and Jackson had instructed for Lane. The Statesman declared that these "cut-and-dried" instructions for Lane were merely to resuscitate his political popularity and give him some prestige as a candidate for re-election to the Senate. "The Presidential humbug is merely to catch gulls with."[1]

The Oregon Weekly Union, anti-Clique organ, thus commented on the schism in the Eugene Convention: "A factious minority, heretofore controlling the action of the party, having lost the confidence long reposed in them, failing to coerce the Convention * * * have deliberately withdrawn and propose to form a new organization * * * There can be but one object in view and that is an *Open or Secret Alliance with the Republicans!* The whole influence of the Statesman for the past year has been on that side."[1] It *is* noticeable during this period that the Statesman made no attack on Republicanism, devoting its energies to fighting the Lane-Stout-Smith faction. The Union on the other hand, was diligent in exposing the dangers of Sewardism and the revolutionary tendency of Republicanism. The striking political events of 1860 were thus foreshadowed.

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[1] Proceedings, Statesman, Nov. 22.

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[1] Union, Nov. 19.

CHAPTER X

THE POLITICAL REVOLUTION OF 1860

While now increasing rapidly in numbers and influence, as strikingly demonstrated in the election of 1859, Oregon Republicans felt the need of a capable leader to champion their cause. They had several men of much ability, but few if any of them were fluent, convincing speakers who could contend creditably with such a masterful orator as Delazon Smith or even with such effective speakers as Judge Willams, Lane and a number of other Democrats. And in a day when political oratory was so important a factor in moulding public sentiment, the handicap suffered by the Republicans was very serious, indeed. Logan ranked with these men, but he was not sound morally, and he was not able to inspire confidence in his sincerity in, and devotion to, the principles for which he was supposed to stand. Years of association together of the prominent Republicans in Oregon politics, breeding the inevitable rivalries and jealousies, made it well nigh impossible that any Oregon Republican of ordinary ability should be accorded that generous allegiance so necessary to success.

As early as in the spring of 1858 it had been suggested at an informal conference of Republican leaders, that an invitation be sent to Col. E. D. Baker, of California, to come to Oregon and take a part in the approaching campaign.[1] Such vigorous objection was made to the idea of an interloper being made so prominent in Oregon affairs, that the matter was quietly but quickly dropped. But Baker was kept informed on the trend of political affairs in Oregon and received encouragement from his northern political friends to remove and cast his political fortunes with Oregon Republicans.[2] He had made a great name for himself in California as an orator and occupied a prominent place in the political activities of that state. But he was a man of the highest political ambition, and having failed of election to the United States Senate from California, looked with favor upon the overtures from Oregon.

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[1] Davenport in Oregon Historical Quarterly for December, 1908, whose account of the appearance of Baker in Oregon has been followed by the writer.

[2] Dryer stated publicly in October, 1860, that both he and Logan had requested Baker to come to Oregon and run for United States Senator. See Argus, Oct. 27, 1860.

In the first weeks of the year 1860[1] he took up his residence with his family at Salem and entered at once upon the political activities of his newly-adopted home. His position was a difficult one. The reason for his removal to Oregon was understood by all. It was natural for those Republicans who had been fighting the battles of the party in days of adversity to look with some jealousy and suspicion upon an outsider who now came in with the ostensible purpose of claiming the first great reward of the party success which now seemed possible. The old spirit of "Oregon offices for Oregonians" was still prevalent. But Baker was a past master in the arts of a politician. He had all the physical endowments that go to make a successful public man—the handsome appearance of a fine physique, dignified, courtly bearing, an incomparable voice. At the same time he had those winning graces of mind and heart which gave him a personal magnetism that was irresistible. He was a politician, but he was more. He gave an impression of a kindly, sincere interest in those about him which the mere affectations of a political demagogue would not inspire. The richness and power of his eloquence was unquestioned.[2] He delivered a great oration on the succeeding fourth of July to which even Bush referred as "eloquent and soul-stirring."[3] His surpassing gift as an orator, combined with his personal charm of manner, disarmed political friends of lurking jealousy and softened the opposition of political enemies. "A great change came over the country with the advent of the Colonel." Oregon Republicans now had a distinguished leader who inspired them with confidence and enthusiasm for coming political struggles.

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[1] Col. Baker arrived at Portland, Feb. 21, 1860.

[2] The incident is recorded by Davenport that during one of Col. Baker's greatest speeches in San Francisco, one of the reporters threw down his pencil, rushed bare-headed into the streets and gesticulating wildly, cried at the top of his voice, "Come in! Come in! The Old Man is talking like a God."

[3] Statesman, July 10.

The State Democratic Convention met April 17 at Eugene, and was controlled by the Lane Democrats. Six of the eight counties which had withdrawn from the convention the preceding November, were not represented. Delazon Smith was chairman of the committee on platform and resolutions, among the other members being the Democratic editors, James O'Meara and J. H. Slater, and Governor Whiteaker.[1] The resolutions merely declared the Cincinnati platform of 1856 to be a true and satisfactory enunciation of the principles of the party. J. W. Drew, of Coos, moved to amend by adding, "as advocated and enunciated by Stephen A. Douglas." The motion was voted down, 60 to 4, which shows clearly the factional status of the Convention. Geo. K. Sheil, of Marion county, was nominated for Congressman. Stout was not considered for renomination—because, said the Statesman, he had been more faithful to the interests of the state than to those of Lane.

The Republicans met in convention April 19. The platform of the preceding year was adopted, with the omission of the Seward instructions.[2] T. J. Dryer, B. J. Pengra and W. H. Watkins were named for presidential electors. Col. Baker addressed the convention on invitation and was unanimously invited to stump the state in the coming canvass.

In 1857 and 1858 the differences between the Oregon Democrats had been largely local and factional. But by this time, while the personal element was not altogether obliterated, the schism in the party was a logical one; it was based on a principle and was national. On the one hand were the Douglas Democrats, led by Bush, stoutly maintaining the doctrine of popular sovereignty. On the other, the Administration Democrats, led by Lane, who held that slavery was protected in the Territories by the Constitution. The strife, occasioned by their differences, tended to increase the distance between them, and to lead each side to emphasize and exaggerate its own tenets. The result was that the Douglas men were becoming more conservative in their interpretation of the Dred Scott decision, approaching that held by the Republicans. The Administration Democrats had, on the other hand, taken a further step in the opposite direction and had now practically become interventionists of the Southern hue. In an editorial in April on "New Doctrine," Bush showed that, despite the fact that it was the settled law of the civilized world that human slavery was the creation of municipal law, by positive enactment, during the Buchanan administration, the doctrine had been advanced in the United States, stealthily, step by step, that slavery was a federal instead of a local institution. "It is assumed," he said, "that it had been so decided by the United States Supreme Court in the Dred Scott Decision. That that court may not so decide, when such question comes before it, no one is authorized to say. But it has not yet so decided. The only decision made by the Court was that a Negro could not bring a suit in a United States Court. The several opinions in addition comprised certain dicta, not possessed of the binding force of law."[1] One is inclined to question his eyes in reading from this source such a statement of the case which would have been considered adequate in any Republican newspaper in 1857. But nothing like this appeared in the Statesman in 1857 or 1858. It indicated the widening breach between the two Democratic wings. The bitter feeling between them was far more intense than between either of them and the Republicans.

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[1] Proceedings, Union, April 24 and Statesman, April 24.

[2] Proceedings, Argus, April 28.

The legislature which was to be chosen at the June election, would be called upon to elect two United States senators at its regular session in September. This fact gave direction to the political activities in the spring. Lane and Smith were the avowed and determined candidates of the radical Democrats and both the Douglas Democrats and the Republicans were stern in the resolution to defeat them. The two latter political divisions thus found themselves in more or less of an alliance. It was unconfessed for the most part and even often openly repudiated, especially by the Douglas men, who because of the alliance were called Mulattoes by the Lane forces. But where principles were similar and purposes the same, some unity of action was inevitable. It was all the more so because Col. Baker was an avowed popular sovereignty man, which rendered him at least inoffensive to the conservative Democrats.

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[1] Statesman, April 10.

The Republicans were now recognized as at least holding the balance of power between the warring Democratic factions and were in fact accused of alliance with each, by the other. As early as November, 1859, Adams made light of the suggestion made by the Portland correspondent of the Statesman that the Lane forces and the Republicans would unite in the election of senators.[1] The Portland Advertiser predicted such fusion and called on Democrats to defeat such an "unholy alliance."[2] Such a suggestion was an implication against the honesty of purpose of the Republicans. Two years previous they had been in alliance with that faction of Oregon Democracy, the "Nationals" or "softs," which now for the most part comprised the Lane party. But no lines were drawn on national principles in that campaign as there were now in 1860. Indeed, a letter appeared in the Argus, March 31, 1860, dated at Yoncalla, signed "A" and evidently written by the old Roman, Jesse Applegate, strongly opposing the idea of coalition with either Democratic wing. "I cannot see how it is possible the Republicans can with any consistency or without doing violence to their principles and forfeiting their self-respect, lend themselves to the base and dirty purposes of one faction of this corrupt party to help the other." He maintained that the Republican party was a party of principle, not price.

Nevertheless, there was a logical basis for an alliance between Republicans and Douglas men, and despite all protestations to the contrary, there was a certain unity of procedure between them. For example, in Marion county, the Douglas men or "Bushites" as they were termed by their Democratic opponents, nominated a legislative ticket and the Lane men did likewise. When the Republicans met in convention, they were advised by Baker not to nominate candidates but to support the Bush ticket. On arriving at a private understanding with the Douglas legislative nominees that they would support Baker for senator, Baker's advice was followed.[1] And this in the face of the fact that the Republicans were probably strong enough in Marion county to have elected their ticket. On the other hand in Washington and Yamhill counties, the anti-Lane Democrats did not nominate candidates, but supported for the most part those of the Republicans. A similar understanding, for the most part unconfessed, seemed to exist over the state.

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[1] Argus, Nov. 12, 1859.

[2] Reported in Statesman, July 10, 1860.

But the most difficult and cleverly managed compromise between the Republicans and Douglas Democrats, and one which had the most far-reaching influence on the political events of the near future, was effected in Linn county, the home of the radical Democratic champion, "Delusion" Smith. In fact it proved the key to the situation. The facts were given the writer by a leading participant in the intrigue.[2] In March, Judge Williams, who was one of the Douglas candidates for senator, went to the Linn county residence of Smith and said to him: "Delazon, I have come here to beard the lion in his den. I am going to canvass Linn county and my object is to beat you and General Lane for the Senate. Come on and make your fight."[3] Smith accepted the challenge and the two made a joint canvass of the county, fighting each other by day and generally sleeping in the same bed at night.[4] While in the county Williams cautiously broached the subject to his fellow Democrats of an alliance with the Republicans as the only means of defeating their pro-slavery opponents. Two efforts were made in this direction at mass meetings held at Albany, attended by both parties. But on both occasions, the Democrats avowed their Democracy and the Republicans their Republicanism so strenuously, the meetings ended in confusion and united action was despaired of. The abhorrence which many Democrats still cherished at any connection with Black Republicans, was hard to overcome. Finally an absolutely secret caucus of seventeen men was held for the purpose of making out a fusion ticket. Active Democrats in the caucus were Anderson Cox, W. R. Bishop, M. D. Byland and Harrison Johnson. John Conner was the leading Republican present, and was made chairman. In making up the legislative ticket, Bishop demanded that a rather illiterate Democrat named Barton Curl, from his part of the county, be named. Curl was a rabid Democrat and "offensively partisan" and was strenuously objected to by the Republicans. Bishop was insistent in his demand. He knew that Curl alone could carry the Democratic vote of the "Santiam forks," the hotbed of Democracy in that part of the state, and that vote would be essential for carrying the county. The Republicans yielded reluctantly. The conditions of alliance were clearly stated to be that the members of the legislative ticket, if elected, were to vote for Col. Baker and some Douglas Democrat for United States senators. The ticket was issued—the public knew not by whom nor whence. Four members of the legislature were to be chosen and three of the nominees on the fusion ticket were elected. One Lane-Smith nominee was successful by a majority of four votes, so close was the election. Barton Curl led the ticket. The judgment of Bishop was vindicated. Linn county had always been counted a Democratic stronghold and this revolution in his own county so weakened and discredited Smith that he was practically eliminated as a serious candidate for the United States senate.[1]

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[1] Davenport, pp. 347-351.

[2] Personal interview with W. R. Bishop.

[3] Williams' address before the legislature of 1899, in Oregon Historical Quarterly for March, 1907, p. 22.

[4] Conversation with Judge Williams.

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[1] Smith refused to consider himself eliminated, as indicated in the following, reprinted from his own paper the Democrat, of Albany, in the Argus, July 21, 1860. This quotation likewise furnishes an example, though somewhat an exaggerated one, of the license indulged in by the Oregon press during this factious period:

"Asohell Bush who runs the Salem smut machine, the club-footed loafer Beggs and Nesmith, the vilest and most loathsome creature that wears the human form on the Pacific Coast, are asserting that *We* are politically dead! Dead!! Never! Never!! No, Never!!! Let these cut-throats, assassins, murderers and their bastard vagabond allies in this county, put that in their pipes and smoke it!!!!"

The hopes of both Lane and Smith were dashed by the general result of the election, by which the political complexion of the ensuing assembly was determined as follows: Lane Democrats, 19; Douglas Democrats, 18; Republicans, 13. Clackamas, Yamhill, Washington and Umpqua counties went solidly Republican. The Douglas ticket won in Marion; the Lane tickets for the most part in Lane, Polk, Benton, Jackson and Josephine. In other counties the results were divided. Sheil, the regular Democratic nominee for Congressman, was victorious over Logan by a majority of 103 votes. The Statesman took no notice of this part of the contest. There was no provision in the State Constitution for the choice of a Congressman at this time, and Bush maintained that the election was illegal and void—a mere political trick of the Lane Democrats. In fact it was electing a representative in Congress eighteen months before his term would begin.

While engrossed in the excitement of state politics, the Oregon politicians were at the same time keeping in close touch with national political affairs and were following the fortunes of the various aspirants for presidential nominations at the approaching national conventions. It is interesting to note who were some of the pre-convention favorites in Oregon. Among the Democrats, while Lane had received the official sanction as the candidate of the Oregon Democracy, it has been shown that he was not really the choice of the Democrats of the state generally. Bush had early pronounced strongly for Douglas.[1] He said he was not of that number that believed or affected to believe that the dissolution of the Union would necessarily follow the election of a Black Republican as president, even were he W. H. Seward. But he did contend that the election of such a "violent sectionalist" would widen the breach between the North and South which might finally result in disunion. This led up to a fervid appeal for Douglas as the one man suitable to meet the crisis.[2] Adams stated that from his observations he had no doubt but that a large majority of Oregon Democrats favored the nomination of Douglas.[1] Even the Union, the Lane, anti-Clique organ, had admitted that, setting aside General Lane, Oregon would most likely favor Douglas and added, "And we are not prepared to say that he would not be the safest and most available candidate."[2] Daniel S. Dickinson was championed by Yamhill Democrats.

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[1] Statesman, Dec. 20, 1859.

[2] "What can be done to stay the destroying tide of blind fanaticism and insure beyond peradventure the perpetuity of our national institutions? Who can and will lead the hosts of Democracy to certain triumph in the approaching strife? Who but the gallant Democratic statesman and leader of the Northwest—the champion of popular sovereignty—the uncompromising advocate of the rights of all the states and the foe to sectionalism in any guise and in every quarter—*Stephen A. Douglas!*

Among the Republicans, also, there were some decided views as to desirable candidates. In October, 1859, Adams declared his preference in a leader—"Edward Bates for President,"[3] and in following issues strongly supported the claims of the Missouri man. This drew out Editor Pengra of the Free Press, who had been responsible for the Seward resolution at the preceding state convention. In answer to Pengra, Adams said that if the editor of the Press had observed his own rule, "not to set up and defend the claims of any particular individual in preference to any others," he would not have introduced, particularly in the manner and at the time it was done, the Seward resolution of which a large majority of the delegates disapproved.[4] He said in effect that it gave their candidate, Logan, more trouble than anything else in the canvass and resulted in his defeat. "There are always some people," he added, "who can never 'let well enough alone,' and our party in Oregon has a few of that stamp.'" Adams maintained that no man in Oregon exceeded him in admiration of Seward as a statesman and patriot, but that he saw how difficult it would be to bring to the support of such a man, the masses with their varied and sectional ideas and interests. Dryer of the Oregonian expressed no choice of a presidential nominee.

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[1] Argus, Nov. 5, 1859.

[2] Union, Nov. 12, 1859.

[3] Argus, Oct. 1, 1859.

[4] Argus, Oct. 29.

"If Mr. Pengra had confined the expression of his preference to the sheet he edits it would have been all right; but when, after a convention had made arrangements to adjourn and half its members had left, supposing that nothing more would be done till the next session, he undertook to saddle his views upon the whole party, he did in our judgment a foolish, and as it proved, an injudicious thing."

The first expression for Lincoln was made in February, 1860. It was in a contributed article of some length, in the Argus, by Simeon Francis, a recent arrival from Illinois. He was the founder of the Springfield "Illinois State Journal" and had for twenty-five years been its editor. His approach to the subject was diplomatic—"Your views in regard to Edward Bates and your high appreciation of the man are my own. . . . The same facts I may say in regard to Abraham Lincoln."[1] There followed a sketch of Lincoln's life and career—of his long and consistent maintenance of Republican principles, the article closing with this tribute: "All these circumstances have placed Mr. Lincoln before his country and will place him before the convention as one of the men worthy of their high behest as a candidate for the first position in the world. He may attain that position. He may not. In either case, Abraham Lincoln will remain one of God's noblemen—noble in his nature, noble in his aims—a pure and great man." Shortly after this Francis succeeded Dryer as editor of the Oregonian and had the satisfaction of engaging actively in the campaign for the election of his candidate.[2]

The National Democratic Convention assembled April 23 at Charleston. The Oregon delegation as selected, consisted of Jos. Lane, Lansing Stout and M. P. Deady, with J. F. Miller, Indian agent, Gen. John Adair, collector at Astoria, and Gen. John K. Lamerick, as alternates. Not all of these attended and the Oregon delegates as present at Charleston, were Stout, Lamerick, Gov. I. I. Stevens of Washington Territory, R. B. Metcalf of Texas, a late Indian agent in Oregon, Justus Steinberger, former agent of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company in Oregon and A. P. Dennison, Indian agent.[3] When the split occurred in the convention on the adoption of the Douglas platform, the Oregon delegation did not withdraw with the pro-slavery seceders, though it had acted in harmony with them in the convention. However, it appears that they remained with the understanding that if Chairman Cushing's decision—to the effect that a two-thirds majority of all the delegates, including the bolters, was necessary to nominate—was reversed, making possible the nomination of Douglas, they too would then withdraw. Lane was in Washington at this time and in answer to a telegram from Stout at Charleston asking for instructions, had sent word to withdraw with the seceding delegates by all means and stand by them.[1] In the same issue of the Statesman in which Bush published Lane's dispatch to Stout, in an editorial on "Lane and Disunion", he accused Lane of being a party to a preconcerted disunion movement. As evidence of the political company Lane associated with, he reproduced the famous "scarlet letter" of W. L. Yancey of Alabama to Jos. S. Sloughter, in which Yancey openly declared for a revolution on the part of the cotton states. Editorial correspondence was also quoted by Bush relative to a projected independent republic on the Pacific Coast, to further which, the Coast Democrats were to aid the South in dissolving the Union.

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[1] Argus, Feb. 11, 1860.

[2] H. L. Pittock became owner of the Oregonian in December, 1860, and in an editorial note announcing his departure for San Francisco to buy new materials, he said: "Mr. Francis will remain in charge of the paper as he has been for the last eight months."

[3] Statesman, July 17.

Not having actually withdrawn from the Charleston Convention, the Oregon delegation, headed by I. I. Stevens, appeared at the adjourned convention at Baltimore. Soon, however, according to the reported proceedings,[2] "Mr. Stevens of Washington Territory, in appropriate remarks, announced the withdrawal of the delegation from Oregon from the convention." The Oregon delegates entered the seceders' convention, which had likewise adjourned to Baltimore, and took part in the nomination of Breckinridge. An Oregon man was made one of the secretaries of the convention.[3] Little information is to be had as to the strength of the sentiment for Lane either at Charleston or Baltimore or as to the motives of the Democratic politicians in putting him forward at all. Amid the excitement and confusion arising from the great schism in the party, for once interest in men was overshadowed by interest in issues, and even the public press contained comparatively little of political gossip or comment of a personal nature. About all that the papers had to say of the vice presidential nominee with Breckinridge, as reported in the Oregon press, was found in the following paragraph of the proceedings:[1] "Mr. Greene of North Carolina nominated Joseph Lane of Oregon for vice president. Mr. Scott of California seconded the nomination with appropriate remarks. Mr. Adkins of Tennessee moved that Mr. Lane be nominated by acclamation. (Cries of No, No, No!) The roll was called—on the first ballot the whole 105 votes were cast for Joe Lane and he was declared nominated for vice president amidst deafening applause."

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[1] Lane's telegram was reprinted in the Statesman, July 3, from the Washington Star: "Hon. Lansing Stout: Your dispatch is received. Stand by the equality of the states and stand by those states that stand by the constitutional rights of all. By all means go with them—go out and stand by them. Joe Lane." The frequent use of the word "stand" in this message made it and Lane the butt of a great deal of fun and ridicule.

[2] In Statesman, July 24 and Union, July 30.

[3] H. R. Crosbie, whose name appeared as Crotaney in the dispatches. Crosbie had taken Metcalf's place on the delegation. According to the Statesman, Sept. 11, he never was a resident of Oregon. Bush said he came out as a hanger-on to Gov. Davis, went to Wash. Ty. and then back to Washington, D. C., where Lane picked him up, put him on his "Oregon Delegation" and sent him "out to stand."

It is interesting to note that the head of the Oregon delegation at Baltimore, Gov. Stevens, was made chairman of the National Democratic Central Committee, of the Southern wing, and managed the campaign for Breckinridge and Lane.[2] Of Oregon's representatives at Charleston and Baltimore, Gen. Stevens and Steinberger joined the Union cause, the former being killed in battle in 1862. Miller was the secession Democratic candidate for governor of Oregon in 1862. Lamerick became commissary of the Louisiana Confederate regiment and Metcalf a lieutenant in the Southern army.

In the meantime, the National Republican Convention had been held at Chicago. The delegates from Oregon, neither of whom were in attendance, had been authorized to appoint their own alternates. The Argus of March 31 spoke of the change of time of the Convention to May 16, one month earlier than it had been announced, saying it would cause inconvenience to the Oregon delegates, adding, "We learn that Leander Holmes, in consequence of his inability to attend, has empowered Horace Greeley to act in his stead and cast his vote for Edward Bates." As to the other alternates and whom they represented there is a little confusion. Frank Johnson of Oregon City, who was then studying theology in New York, was in attendance representing Oregon. It is generally understood that Joel Burlingame, father of Anson Burlingame and who had just returned East from Oregon, held a proxy at Chicago. This accounts for the number and yet Eli Thayer of Massachusetts, was credited with being a proxy delegate from Oregon.[1] Through Greeley, Oregon, wielded a very potent and far-reaching influence at the Chicago Convention. This is clearly brought out in a very interesting letter from Johnson to the Argus, extracts of which follow:[2]

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[1] Union, July 30.

[2] Statesman, July 24.

"The Governor undertook the herculean task. In a single night he wrote the party address to the country—an address covering a whole page of a large metropolitan newspaper, a feat for which Gen. Lane years afterward expressed unbounded admiration and astonishment, both for its ability and for its ease and rapidity with which it was dashed off. During the next four months Gov. Stevens drove on the canvas with his accustomed energy and ability."—Hazard Stevens, "Life of Gen. Isaac I. Stevens", Vol. II., p. 305.

> "The first hearty outburst of enthusiasm was on the announcement of Horace Greeley as member of the committee on platform and resolutions, from Oregon. It was received with universal applause and cries of 'When did you move?' It was felt that the greatest difficulty of the Convention would be to create a platform acceptable to all the classes represented. . . The result is the most perfect and unequivocal statement of Republican faith ever written, the wisest and most diplomatic points of which, I think I am safe in saying, Oregon had the honor to contribute.
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> During the third ballot there was tolerable order until Oregon declared for Lincoln, rendering his nomination certain.[3] At this point the enthusiasm became irrepressible; the Wigwam was shaken with cheers from 23,000 Republicans, which were renewed as state after state declared its unanimous vote for 'the man who could split rails and maul Democrats.' "

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[1] Statesman, July 24.

[2] Argus, July 14.

[3] Not absolutely certain. Oregon's change to Lincoln gave him 231½ votes, within 1 1-2 votes of the nomination. Another state then corrected the vote, giving Lincoln 4 more and nominating him by a margin of 2 1-2 votes. Previous to its switch to Lincoln, the Oregon delegation had been voting for Bates.

COL. EDWARD DICKINSON BAKER
ELECTED U. S. SENATOR, 1860
KILLED AT THE BATTLE OF BALLS BLUFF, OCTOBER 21, 1861

Adams announced that Lincoln's nomination had been received all over Oregon with probably more enthusiasm than would have been that of any other man.[1] He held that the great mass of Oregon Republicans had favored Bates, as being the most available candidate, but that the enthusiasm of the convention for Lincoln had shown them their mistake. He paid a high tribute to Lincoln for his nobility of character, his purity of purpose and his lack of demagogism, asserting that "Abraham Lincoln stands up to-day as the best known representative of Republicanism in the Union." The pugnacious "Parson" closed with the aggressive prediction—"If he is elected, he will take his seat, unless assassinated, and rule this government, in spite of all the Union-threatening Democratic traitors this side of the lake of fire and brimstone."

When the result of the National Democratic Conventions became known in Oregon, Bush promptly entered the name of Douglas in the Statesman as the regular Democratic nominee and at the same time renewed the attack on Republicanism which he had for some time ignored while waging war against the pro-slavery Democrats.[2] He did not cease his attacks on the latter. He now made a double attack. He pleaded eloquently with all Democrats to come up to the support of "Douglas and the Union" and referred to the speeches of the Southern agitators as containing "as damnable treason as ever fell from the lips of the wildest abolition fanatic that disgraces the North."[3] In commenting upon the assertion made by the Portland Advertiser that the Republicans were shouting "Hurrah for Joe Lane," Bush said, "We have noticed this somewhat remarkable sympathy with the Yancey bolters on the part of the Republicans. We account for it on the score of sympathy with kindred sectionalism." He could not find language too vituperative to apply to Buchanan for deserting Douglas,[4] which language reads strangely when compared with the laudatory words Bush had for Buchanan only two short years before.

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[1] Argus, July 14.

[2] Statesman, July 24.

[3] Ibid., July 31.

[4] In an editorial, Aug. 21, on "The Blackest of Treason," the following expressions are found: "Buchanan will be remembered with ineffable hate and scorn. . The black hearted and infamous treason of Jas. B. . . . . His corrupt heart has hatched this egg of treason. . . Jas. B., reeking with corruption and treason and rankling with malice and hate . . The name of Jas. B., will like Arnold and Iscariot, be the synonym of treachery and infamy."

The Democratic State Central committee met at Eugene, August 18. R. E Stratton, declaring that a division and separation of the committee was inevitable and that the issue might just as well be drawn at once, introduced a resolution declaring for Douglas and Johnson as the regular Democratic nominees.[1] Delazon Smith moved to amend by substituting the names of Breckinridge and Lane. A full discussion followed. Smith favored leaving the question open until the meeting of the state convention, which the committee was to call for the purpose of nominating presidential electors, and in the meantime having the Democrats of the state in their primary meetings determine upon the action to be taken. He further suggested that the committee recommend that the convention name one ticket, made up from both divisions of the party. Stratton, maintaining that there was no hope of concerted action, pressed his resolution, with the amendment of Smith, to a vote. The amendment was sustained by a vote of 9 to 6, whereupon the Douglas men withdrew. The committee then issued a call for a state convention to be held at Eugene, September 18, to nominate three presidential electors and to ratify the platform adopted by the Breckinridge Convention at Baltimore. The Douglas members of the central committee also issued a call for a state convention to be held at Eugene on September 19.[2]

The Breckinridge convention, after endorsing Breckinridge and Lane and the platform they stood upon, reiterated allegiance to the National platform of 1856 as interpreted by that of 1860, as the only proper solution of the question of slavery in the Territories; deprecated the "blatant, unprincipled calumniations of the present national administration;" declared undiminished confidence in "our esteemed Hero-Citizen", Lane, the true hero of Buena Vista. The sixth and seventh planks expressed the attitude and spirit of the convention toward the other two parties. The sixth—"That we are unalterably opposed to the unconstitutional 'irrepressible conflict' doctrines of the sectional, Black Republican, abolitionized party, which placed the Negro-equality Lincoln in nomination for the Presidency." The seventh declared want of confidence in the Douglas Democratic leaders of the state and declared themselves to "heartily despise and loathe the vile treason, the gross personalities and the hypocritical teachings of the Oregon Statesman and those who furnish the Judas material for its weekly issues." For presidential electors, Delazon Smith, James O'Meara and D. W. Douthitt, were named. Before adjourning, the convention empowered the central committee to act as a conference committee to confer with any committee that might be appointed by the Douglas convention for the purpose of effecting conciliation.

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[1] Proceedings in Union, Aug. 21.

[2] Statesman, Aug. 28.
Proceedings in Union, Sep. 22.

But the Douglas Democrats, who met on the following day in convention, manifested no desire for reconciliation.[1] Their uncompromising attitude was expressed in the resolution which endorsed the principle of non-intervention, "as the same was understood in 1848 when Gen. Cass was the Democratic nominee for the Presidency; as the same was understood in 1852 when Gen. Pierce was the Democratic nominee; as it was understood in 1856 when James Buchanan was the Democratic nominee; and as affirmed, re-affirmed, endorsed and re-endorsed by every state and national convention and every Democratic leader and statesman for the past twelve years." Douglas and Johnson were endorsed and their platform cordially approved. The following were nominated for electors: W. H. Farrar, Benj. Hayden, Wm. Hoffman.[2]

The legislature had met September 10, with all attention centered on the election of United States senators. In an editorial upon the subject the week before, Bush argued that the next United States Senate would contain about an equal number, 30, of intervention Democrats for slavery and intervention Republicans against, and that the safety of the Union in restricting the conflict between them lay in the small band of non-intervention Democrats who held the balance of power. Therefore, he maintained that it was important to send two non-intervention senators from Oregon, especially as Oregon had always occupied that ground. Note that Bush did not expressly demand that both senators should be Democrats. In fact he tacitly admitted that they would not be when he expressed the hope that no overtures for a compromise would be entertained which looked to the election of anyone not pledged strictly to non-intervention.[1] This drew the fire of the Union, which declared that "Never was treason more foul." It asserted that the Statesman proprietor had grown immensely rich by favors bestowed on him by the party and that now, "in the hour of its peril, he spurns it away and flippantly talks of electing two United States senators without reference to political complexion. The mask has fallen and behold, men of Oregon, the loathsome mess it concealed."

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[1] "The Convention manifested no disposition to compromise present divisions for the sake of carrying the state against the Republicans beyond peradventure, but persisted in a spirit of blind infatuation known only to those who are goaded to desperation."—Union, Sep. 22.

[2] Proceedings in Statesman, Sep. 25.

The anti-Lane faction was victorious in the organization of the Assembly, B. F. Harding of Marion being elected Speaker of the house and Luther Elkins of Linn, president of the senate. To prevent a quorum in the latter, six of the Lane-Smith members withdrew and went into hiding, their purpose being to make impossible the election of senators unsatisfactory to their faction. In fact it was asserted by the Breckinridge Democrats that no legislation should take place until Delazon Smith was elected senator, his term having expired before Lane's. Warrants were issued for the arrest of the absconding senators but they could not be found. The two Democratic conventions were in session at Eugene at this time. The Breckinridge convention heartily endorsed the action of the six senators as "preventing the consummation of a gross and infamous fraud upon the Democratic masses of this state by the accomplishment of the election of a Black Republican to the Senate of the United States, as the fruit of a corrupt and infamous secret coalition." The Douglas convention referred to the abscondence as "part and parcel of that great revolutionary scheme initiated by those who seceded from the National Democratic convention."

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[1] Statesman, Sept. 4.

After unsuccessful balloting for United States senators, the legislature adjourned. Gov. Whiteaker, though a strong partisan of the Breckinridge faction, issued an appeal to the absent senators to return to their seats, which they did on September 24. They were censured by the senate, in a vote of 8 to 7. The result of the first ballot after the re-assembling of the legislature, taken October 1, was: For the long term—Nesmith 16, Smith 19, Baker 12, Williams 2, Curry 1. For the short term—Grover 17, Willams 11, Holbrook 11, Curry 7, Drew 2. After ten ineffective ballots, adjournment was made until the following day. On the fourth ballot of the next day, the vote stood: Long term—Deady 22, Nesmith 27; short term—Baker 26, Williams 20. Twenty-six votes were necessary to elect. Oregon had chosen as her United States senators, J. W. Nesmith, a Douglas Democrat, and Col. E. D. Baker, a Republican. The first step in the political revolution of 1860 had been taken.

The contest had been a long and complicated one. The Douglas Democrats were reluctant to vote for even so conservative a Republican as Baker, and held out in the hope of effecting some satisfactory compromise with their factional opponents. But they refused absolutely to vote for Smith of the other side and were as insistent on the election of their own candidate, Nesmith. But the Breckinridge party steadfastly refused to support Nesmith unless Smith were made the other senator. Compromise was thus impossible. These conditions were set forth in an address issued by the fifteen Democrats who voted for Baker, explaining their action.[1] They contended that it was better to combine with the Republicans than have no senators at all, especially as Baker was a non-interventionist who really differed but little from them in his views and would make Oregon a worthy senator.[1]

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[1] Statesman, Oct. 8.

The Democratic press was practically a unit in denouncing the coalition, but the Statesman defended it, hurling defiance at "the Yanceyites," upon whom it threw the burden of responsibility because of their determination to elect disunionists to the Senate.[2] The Republican press was jubilant. "Glorious Result," was the caption of the article in the Argus, October 6, announcing the "glorious news." Adams made the first open, unreserved public reference to the means by which it was accomplished when he said—"The combination by which it was effected was made by the people in June and has been honorably and fairly carried out by their representatives." He had a good word for Nesmith—the first ever seen in the Argus for a Democrat and which was eloquent of the spiritual exaltation of the combative "Parson" over the result. In speaking of "Our Republican Senator, Col. Baker," he was effervescent. Salem correspondence in the Argus, signed "A. H." deprecated the action of the Oregonian and the Statesman in "toning down" Baker's Republicanism and imputing to him some of the heresies of Douglas in order to justify the actions of the Democrats who voted for him.[3] But this correspondent was evidently one Amory Holbrook, who, having political aspirations of his own, was jealous of Baker. As a member of the legislature he had refused to vote for the Colonel, and his defection had almost been fatal to the Republican cause he professed to support.

A few weeks later Adams noted that "a sudden anguish has seized hold of a speckled herd of politicians that expresses itself in groanings that evince the most extreme agony."[4] He took such from the disunion Democrats as a matter of course.

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[1] In his correspondence dated Nov. 1, 1863, to the San Francisco Bulletin, M. P. Deady maintained that Baker owed more to the existence of the Oregon Indian war debt for his election, than had ever been told; that those who held war scrip, concluding that it would be necessary to have an advocate on the Republican side of Congress before an appropriation would be made for the payment of the debt, lent a potent influence in favor of Baker.

[2] Statesman, Oct. 5.

[3] Argus, Oct. 13.

[4] Ibid., Oct. 20.

But in reference to "a weak echo" from a few Douglas organs, he stated plainly that the fusion in June had been made with the distinct purpose which had been embodied in the election; that some coalition was absolutely necessary to election and the one which took place was the only logical and honorable one. In reply to the charge made against Baker that he was a new comer, Adams answered that he came voluntarily to locate permanently and already had a national reputation, which "isn't like electing a newcomer that nobody knows anything about—a second-rate, jack-leg lawyer, that may turn out to be a tool of some disunion scoundrel as your man Stout has done." The Oregonian, now edited by Francis, had taken the same position, but expressed it in more temperate language.[1] Great satisfaction was expressed at the removal of the Lane incubus and honor was done to the men who achieved it.[2] The People's Press, the other Republican paper in the state, joined the Argus and Oregonian in the jubilant expression of satisfaction over the result.

Reports appeared in the press that the joyous Republicans of the state held celebrations of the victory—that in some cases one hundred guns were fired in "glorification" on receipt of the news of Baker's election. But even then they could not know the significance of what had taken place. This senatorial election takes a highly important place in the political history of this very critical period, both locally and nationally. Locally, it marked the complete disruption of the Oregon Democracy and paved the way for the Union movement in Oregon which was effected in 1862. Nationally, it sent a man in E. D. Baker to the United States Senate, who, by his impassioned oratory and inspiring personal example, strengthened the whole country with an answering thrill of loyalty and a determination to meet bravely the crisis of the nation.

With the senatorial question settled, renewed attention was given the approaching presidential election. The Statesman labored aggressively for Douglas, and as the campaign advanced, had much more to say against Breckinridge than against Lincoln, though by no means countenancing Republicanism. Bush addressed a special appeal to the supporters of Bell and Everett, to be true to their name of "Constitutional Union party" by voting for Douglas and by not throwing away their votes and helping to give Oregon to one of the sectional parties.[1] To the "Southern Men" he urged that Douglas maintained the *old* Democratic doctrine that the people of the Territories should regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, while Lincoln and Breckinridge, "twin brothers on intervention," declared that Congress should regulate for them.[2]

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[1] Oregonian, Sept. 29.

[2] Oregonian, Sep. 29.

The Union was equally energetic and violent in behalf of Breckinridge and Lane, begging Democrats not to throw away votes on Douglas, but to vote for Breckinridge to defeat Lincoln and save the Union. A greater number of the Democratic papers of the state supported the Breckinridge than the Douglas ticket.[3] In the East, as the campaign advanced, it seemed at least entirely possible that no candidate would have a majority of the electoral votes, which, according to the Constitution, would throw the election of President into the lower house of Congress. But according to the political complexion of that body, an election would apparently still be impossible. The election of vice president would be in the hands of the Senate, where it was thought the Southern Democrats would be strong enough to elect their candidate Lane, who would thus become President of the United States, the house having failed to choose a chief executive. [illegible] view of the fact that the hope for such a denouement became prevalent among Eastern Democrats, as a last resort for defeating Lincoln, it is rather surprising that no reflection of this purpose is seen during the campaign in Lane's own state.

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[1] Statesman, Oct. 29.

[2] Statesman, Nov. 5.

[3] Among the papers supporting Breckinridge, were the Union, Oregon Democrat, Jacksonville Sentinel, Eugene Herald, Roseburg Express and Portland Daily News; supporting Douglas, were the Statesman, Portland Times, Portland Advertiser and The Dalles Mountaineer.

The Republican press hewed to the line for Lincoln, attacking with equal vigor the pretensions of the two Democratic parties. As usual, "Parson" Adams furnished the most striking and picturesque illustrations of the Republican attitude. "Fight on, ye mercenary hounds," was his encouraging word to the Democratic factions. They were cheerfully informed that while they were telling the truth about each other and proving their unfitness for future trusts, the people were looking upon their discomfiture with indifference as to who might prove the victor. "Have at you then, ye bullying Disunionists and ye time-serving Dough-faces! We need not the cowardly threats of one or the servile whinings of the other."[1] In an editorial on "Disunionism", he said: "The Douglas organs are making a terrible hulla-baloo about the Disunionism of the Breckinridge party. This is all very well as their charges are true, and being true, it ought to damn every Disunion tool in the country. But then we can see no great difference in the two factions on this score. While Douglas is a professed friend of the Union, his colleague Johnson is as rabid a Disunionist as Yancey."[2]

This attitude seems rather strange, considering the successful coalition which had just taken place between the Douglas Democrats and the Republicans in the election of United States senators. The Argus was evidently determined to impress those wavering voters, who were loyal to the Union, with the necessity of supporting Lincoln. To make it easy for such to support the Republican ticket, an attempt had been made during the recent session of the legislature to repeal the Viva Voce ballot law, passed during the troublous times of the Know Nothings, and to substitute the secret ballot. A bill to this effect was carried in the house by a vote of 18 to 12, the Republicans and the Bush, or old organization Democrats, supporting it, the Breckinridge Democrats opposing.[3] The Salem correspondent to the Union made this comment: "There is, however, this gratification—that this measure, intended to cover up the tracks of the Bushites in voting, as they intend to do for Lincoln, cannot pass the senate. Notwithstanding the impotent howling of the Clique organ, there is Democracy enough here to kill it, so that after all, the coalitionists only show their cloven feet, without realizing any advantage." The prophecy proved correct, as the measure was lost in a tie vote in the senate. It is diverting to see the old organization Democrats attempting to withdraw from their own noose which they had tied to catch Know Nothings with, while those members who as National Democrats had so vehemently denounced the Viva Voce law, now upheld it just as strenuously.[1]

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[1] Argus editorial, Sept. 29—"When Thieves Fall Out, Honest Men Get Their Dues."

[2] Ibid., Oct. 13.

[3] Ibid., Oct. 20.

On November 6, Oregon gave Lincoln a plurality of 270 votes over the Democratic candidates and the political revolution of 1860 was complete. The candidates were voted for as follows: Lincoln, 5344; Breckinridge, 5074; Douglas, 4131; Bell, 212.[2] The relative strength of the Democratic candidates was a surprise, and in this connection it is significant that Oregon was the only northern state which gave a larger vote for Breckinridge than for Douglas.[3]

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[1] Two "notables" remained consistent—one on each side. Col. J. K. Kelly of Clackamas, an old National, and now a Lane Democrat, voted for the repeal, while Bush, who had championed the Viva Voce law, was, according to his own statement (Statesman, Nov. 5) opposed to its repeal.

[2] Official returns in Statesman, Dec. 3. For vote by counties, see Appendix II.

A. J. Thayer, who had been nominated by the Douglas State central committee, October 17, for Congressman, received 4099 votes. He had no opposition, as the Breckinridge Democrats agreed to ignore the election, claiming it to be as illegal as that of Sheil in June. Thayer was seated as a member of Congress, July 4, 1861 (Congressional proceedings in Argus, July 27) but the matter was taken up and reconsidered July 26, when Thayer was removed and Sheil seated. (Congressional proceedings in Union, Sep. 9, 1861).

[3] Judson, Fiftieth Anniversary Proceedings, p. 45.

CHAPTER XI

"TREASON, STRATAGEMS AND SPOILS"

(1860-1861)

Governor Whiteaker, in his message to the legislature in September, 1860, referred to the "mental war" being waged all over the Union, "probably with as much virulence in Oregon as in any other of the States." Deprecating the charges and counter charges of disunion and treasonable sentiments, he doubted there being two men in the state who would not prefer the integrity of the Union with the certainty that their peculiar political views would never be adopted, to disunion with certain success in the division within which they might chance to fall. He therefore held it unnecessary and inadvisable for conservative men to enter into this war of words. This was the view of the situation, at least professed, as held by an irreconcilable, pro-slavery Democrat of the Southern school.[1] In reply, Bush said: "We don't see how Governor Whiteaker can arrive at such conclusions with his eyes and ears open. We believe that two-fifths of all the men in Oregon who are supporting Breckinridge would prefer disunion, on such conditions; and that full one fifth would look with complacency on disunion in any event."[2]

Judging merely from the expression of the Democratic press immediately after the election of Lincoln, in regard to the current threats of secession, Whiteaker was nearer right than Bush. The Oregon Weekly Union, the staunch Breckinridge and Lane organ, while lamenting sorely the result of the election, and denouncing both Republicans and Douglas Democrats as blameworthy for the troublous times which were threatened, came out strongly against secession at once. In a two-column editorial on "Nullification," November 24, it stated emphatically that there was no way whereby a state might resume the power relinquished to the Federal Government in the bond of Union, or prevent the enforcement of the laws passed by Congress, but by open, undisguised revolution. It might be called nullification, secession or an "irrepressible conflict," yet it was none the less revolution. It might be peaceable and without bloodshed, but still it would be revolution. It might come from resistance to laws providing for raising a revenue or for the return of fugitive slaves—from resistance in South Carolina or in Massachusetts, it would be revolution and if carried so far as to result in armed resistance it might truthfully be denominated as treason. At the same time, the Union could not forbear taking the North to task for inconsistency, pointing out that it was treason to nullify the laws of Congress in South Carolina, but in Massachusetts it was quite a different thing. In the one place it suggested a halter and a gallows while in the other it was commended and gloried in.

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[1] "Old Whit" is a good specimen of a sturdy, frontier farmer man, formed of a cross between Illinois and Missouri, with a remote dash of something farther Down East. Although wrong in the head in politics, he is honest and right in the heart.—Deady, Oct. 13, 1862, to San Francisco Bulletin.

[2] Statesman, Oct. 1, 1860.

In the next issue, December 1, the Union expressed itself still more strongly. It declared that resistance to Lincoln as a candidate was one thing and resistance to him as President was quite another. "Therefore, while in common with Northern Democracy we resisted, and still resist the aggressions of Republicanism on the South, we have no sympathy with any scheme of disloyalty to the Union. And while we will not desist from exposing the causes which have led to these unhappy results and will continue to place the responsibility where it belongs, we disclaim for ourselves and the Democracy of Oregon, any sympathy or affiliation with the secession of any of the states; and warn them, that, if carried so far as to result in resistance to the laws of the Federal Union, it must be put down with all the power of the government. And in this, they will find the North united as one man in support of the government, no matter who is President." The Union has been quoted at some length to show clearly the uncompromising attitude of the Southern press in Oregon before secession became an accomplished fact.

But during the next few months the Union receded from its high ground, devoting most of its space to "exposing the causes which have led to these unhappy results",—the most pleasurable part of the mission to which it had committed itself. Northern fanatics were denounced and the South tacitly exonerated. A kind of bogie man was made of "Coercion," which was declared to be a very different thing from executing the federal laws against the individual citizens of a state.[1] The Oregon Democrat, assuming even more advanced ground, made a distinction between nullification and secession, holding that while the former was wrong and monstrous, secession was eminently right and proper.[2] While very few Democratic papers in Oregon made so free and open confession of faith as this, the attitude which they for the most part generally assumed was expressive of such conviction.

By May, Slater of the Union was advising Oregon to assume a neutral ground in the struggle. In an editorial, "What Will the Pacific States Do?" he went no farther than to "presume" that Oregon and California were loyal, and he would not favor any scheme looking to their severance from the Union, "unless, in the progress of the general conflagration, some such step should become absolutely necessary for self-preservation." He maintained that as the war was not against a foreign nation, the people of the Pacific Coast should assume neutral ground and refuse to be involved in "this general melee which politicians have kicked up over the mountains."[3] "There is high blood in Oregon as well as elsewhere, and it will be well for all concerned to keep quiet and cool," admonished Slater. He continued to make perfunctory professions of loyalty, but took no position in favor of maintaining the Union. In an editorial on "Where We Stand," he failed to give the information indicated. While protesting that he acknowledged no flag but that of the Union, he avowed unalterable opposition to any policy which looked toward waging a war of subjugation on the South.[4] This harmonizes not at all with his fulsome declaration of December first.

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[1] Union, Feb. 2, 1861.
[2] Argus, Jan. 5.
[3] Union, May 4.
[4] Ibid., May 18.

There was a notable exception to this general negative attitude of the Democratic press. As the movement toward secession developed, after Lincoln's election, the Statesman was far more vigorous and radical in demanding that the government put down the rebellion promptly by force of arms and hang the rebels, than was either the Argus or Oregonian. The latter, as Administration organs, were cautious, desiring rather to follow and support Lincoln's policy, when it should become known, than to take the initiative by advocating those of their own which might prove embarrassing in being out of harmony with that adopted at Washington. This attitude of the Republican press is well exemplified in an Oregonian editorial —"The Union—Can it be Preserved?"[1] "We are not disposed," said Francis, "to discuss at this time, the right of secession. Nor are we prepared to express an opinion as to the propriety of a resort to force to compel seceding states to remain in the Union, against their will and consent." Greeley of the Tribune was quoted with approval to the effect that he was opposed to a Union "which had to be pinned together with the bayonet," and that "if they were determined to go, let them go in peace." Bush *was* prepared to express an opinion and as usual expressed it with unfailing vigor, urging the new Administration to adopt prompt and heroic measures for ruthlessly crushing out the rebellion and dealing summarily with the traitors. He wasted no time on fine distinctions between nullification and secession, between enforcing United States laws and coercion.

His term as senator having expired, Lane arrived in Oregon once more, the last of April. But he had never before experienced such a home coming. It was an unfortunate coincidence for him that at the very time of his arrival, came the news of the firing upon Fort Sumpter. There was no longer any doubt that the man whom Oregon had long delighted to honor was a secessionist. Not only had his public actions so declared him, but personal letters written to Southern friends commending secession had appeared in the Southern press and had found their way into Oregon papers.[1] His reception was sullen and ominous. On his arrival at Dallas on his way home to the southern part of the state, the people raised the Stars and Stripes, fired a salute of thirty-four guns for the Union and hung Lane in effigy.[2] It was pretty generally admitted by this time that a movement, more or less tangible, was on foot for establishing a Pacific Coast Republic and it was believed by very many, as had been charged, that Lane had come home for the purpose of aiding in the conspiracy to that end.[3]

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[1] Oregonian, Jan. 12.

There was nothing new in the idea suggested of an independent government on the Pacific Coast. In 1855, the Standard had seriously questioned whether Oregon would not be better off under such a government than under that of the United States. It held that the Rocky Mountains presented an unmistakable boundary, and that such boundaries, laid by an over-ruling Providence, ought to be more strictly regarded.[4] Positive assertions concerning schemes of disunion and the setting up of a new Western republic, appeared in the press the same year.[5] In July, 1860, Bush declared it to be stated on authority, considered reliable that the Pacific Delegation in Congress had held a caucus and resolved to favor disunion and the formation of three separate republics—the North, South and Pacific. That this insane project was entertained by some ambitious and designing politicians, he declared there could be no doubt, and indicated that Lane was implicated.[6] The Oregonian, January 26, 1861, had published a letter written by

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[1] "I am glad a majority of the people of Oregon have determined to leave a Union that refuses you equality and protection. *You are right:* and I am sure that you will take no step backwards".—Lane, Jan. 6, 1861, to a Southern friend, printed in Georgia Constitutionalist and reprinted in Statesman, Feb. 25.

"You are right and I am with you heart and soul. . . I, with thousands of good Northern men, will be by their [the Southern States] side".—Lane, Dec. 14, 1860, to a Georgia relative, printed in Columbus, Ga., Times, and reprinted in Oregonian, March 2, 1861.

[2] Argus, May 11.

[3] "It is said here that 'Joseph' goes to Oregon early in next month for the purpose of inaugurating the Pacific Republic and I am inclined to think that that is his object."—Senator Nesmith, Washington, D. C., Feb. 26, 1861, to Harvey Gordon, Salem.

[4] Standard editorial "Our Future", quoted in Oregonian, July 28, 1855.

[5] Statesman, Sep. 8, 1855.

[6] Ibid., July 24, 1860.

Burch, a California Congressman, which had been made public, in which was argued the wisdom of a Pacific Republic.

There could be no doubt that such a project was considered and it was a very reasonable assumption, to say the least, that Lane was connected with it. But whatever his plans were for procedure in Oregon,[1] he found it necessary on arrival to placate the public sentiment, unmistakable evidence of which greeted him on every hand. He began to extol the "Union and the Constitution" as he mingled with the people with his familiar and effusive "God bless you" greeting. He made a short speech at Corvallis on the national situation and the Union said that many were surprised to find that instead of being a disunionist and a secessionist, Gen. Lane was a strong Union man and unequivocally opposed to any move towards the separate independence of the Pacific.[2] It had been noticeable in the weeks previous, the Union had been very silent as to Lane's attitude as exhibited in the East. This drew forth the retort from Adams that Lane hoped by blarney and a great show of patriotism to reunite the Democracy and get himself elected as governor and a disunion representative in Congress. "That being done, his Union garments will be thrown off, and, like the wardrobe of a circus-rider, his old dirty rags of treason will be discovered to have grown fast to his hide."[3] The Union soon gave color to the above charge when in a long editorial it pleaded, almost agonizingly, for a union of the Democracy. Let by-gones be by-gones with the two wings—get together and stop the inroads which the Republicans are making in the Democratic ranks—was the burden of its exhortation.

Within a month after the fall of Sumpter, Union Clubs were being organized in Oregon. Immediately on receipt of the news from South Carolina a large and enthusiastic Union mass meeting was held at Portland in the Willamette theater.[1] Stirring speeches were made by Dr. A. G. Henry of Yamhill, and by J. H. Mitchell and Geo. B. Currey of Portland. The Portland Times said that as the last speaker left the stand, a sudden removal or change of the scenery at the rear of the stage exposed to view the unfurled banner of the Union—and, as if by electricity, the audience arose to their feet in enthusiastic cheers for the flag. It is significant that one of the very first Union Clubs to be started in Oregon was organized in a settlement of foreign citizens, at Aurora, May 17. Dr. Wm. Keil, a native Prussian, had established a German settlement in this section of Marion county in 1855.[2] Dr. Keil addressed the meeting along with others. Ringing resolutions were passed pledging heartiest support of the Government "against all foes from without or traitors within."[3] A strong club was organized and Union sentiment ran high. "The German brass band enlivened the exercises by playing national airs in their best style." What took place at Aurora was soon taking place over the state.

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[1] On the way south by wagon, Lane accidentally shot himself. About November first the Oregon Democrat reported with regret that he was recovering but slowly from the effect of the unfortunate accident. This prompted the Statesman, Nov. 11, to say: "He received this shot in lifting a box containing arms which he brought home with him in considerable quantity, it is generally believed, with the design of arming a company of men to secede the state, and many persons do not regard that shot so unfortunate as it might have been."

[2] Union, May 11.

[3] Argus, May 18.

This general manifestation of Union sentiment brought to light the real animus of the majority of the Democratic papers and the Southern Democrats generally, most of whom had been protesting their loyalty in a negative sort of way. Slater belittled and scoffed at the Union meetings, branding them as a mere scheme of designing politicians to deceive the people into the embrace of Republicanism under the cloak of an effort to save the Union.[4] "As might be expected," said the Oregonian, "the Advertiser[5] opposes the formation of Union Clubs. While secessionists are plotting treason everywhere, while the Knights of the Golden Circle are carrying on their murderous and cowardly schemes, while bloody treason stalks red-handed through the land, are the friends of the Union to take advice from its enemies and forbear to use a harmless precaution?" Flag raisings were opposed by the Southern sympathizers as tending to fan animosities and incite sectional enmities. Violence was threatened in some cases if the determination to raise the Stars and Stripes were persisted in. Adams claimed to believe that nine-tenths of those opposing Union meetings and flag raisings, did so, not from disloyalty to the government, but from a silly belief that they were Republican demonstrations; that in this belief they were encouraged by the leaders of secession in Oregon. He stated that in passing through the country he found that all the Douglas Democrats and nine-tenths of the Breckinridge Democrats were loyal and opposed the efforts of secession organs to make party capital out of national troubles, while they lauded the patriotic position of the Statesman and Portland Times. But Adams' estimate was evidently like election forecasts—given for a purpose.

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[1] Argus, May 11.

[2] Dr. Keil made the settlement as a practical test of his communistic theories. Aurora became the Republican stronghold of Marion county and a center of Union sentiment.

[3] Argus, May 25.

[4] Union, May 25.

[5] The Portland Advertiser, edited by Ex-Governor Curry, had pronounced most emphatically for the integrity of the Union, but like the Corvallis Union, had suffered a relapse.

On May 28, Gov. Whiteaker issued a long address to the people of Oregon on the situation, in which, while professing loyalty to the Union, he took strong grounds against Union meetings and disapproved the war.[1] The following sentences from the message are of no little significance, coming as they did with the official sanction of the state government: "These are not Union meetings, but are creating disunion directly in our midst. . . . I suspect that there is about as much patriotism to be found among those who have no anathemas for any portion of the country—even if they do not think the Union can be preserved by the sword, as in the hearts of those who cry havoc and blood at every breath. . . . In God's name what good is this war to bring the country? None; positively none." The weight of the official sanction, however, was not sufficient to deter the militant "Parson" from branding "poor fiddling Whiteaker or 'Old Cat-Gut' " as "the biggest ass in the state" and "at heart as rotten a traitor as Jeff Davis."[2]

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[1] Union, June 8.
[2] Argus, June 8.

The attitude of Oregon's Southern Democracy is exemplified in the resolutions passed at a mass meeting of the Democracy of Linn county, June 5. "Loyalty to the Union—the whole Union," was avowed. Association with secessionists and traitors was disavowed, and sectionalists or violators of the Constitution were discountenanced. The idea of a Pacific Republic was opposed as visionary and dangerous. At the same time it was asserted that the Government could be maintained only by a spirit of conciliation and compromise; that coercion was but another name for war and was disunion. Therefore, opposition to the war and the war policy of the Administration, was announced.[1] Slater heralded this meeting as a great success in every way, while casting slurs on the numerous Union meetings. The Democratic organs referred to the war as "Lincoln's war" and denounced him as a usurper, revolutionist, monarchist and tyrant. The Union was replete with such expressions as "Lincoln's rump Congress," "Greeley's abolition war," "The banquet of blood" (Bull Run) and "Lincoln I." It could not conceal its exultation over the defeat at Bull Run, saying that the rout was complete and total and the victory on the part of the South one that they might well be proud of. In the issue of August 26 appeared the message of Jefferson Davis. By this time the secession odor of "The Onion," as Bush called it, was sufficiently strong to discount its loudest protestations of loyalty.

Senator Baker, having eloquently championed the Union cause on the floor of the United States senate, volunteered his services on the outbreak of the rebellion and was given a command. On October 21 he was killed at the head of his men at the battle of Balls Bluff. In appointing a successor to Oregon's Republican senator, Gov. Whiteaker further revealed his animus in the choice of Benjamin Stark. The appointment was received with disappointment, disgust and anger. The Statesman declared Stark to be "a secessionist of the rankest dye and the craziest professions—a traitor as infamous as any that disgraces Northern soil. He has enjoyed the credit of a letter written several years ago, raising the idea of a Pacific Republic and has ever since claimed to be the representative of this scheme."[1] The Oregonian asserted that the citizens of Oregon had been wronged beyond measure, but thanked God the state would have to submit but a few months to the degradation.[2] Actual extracts were published of vituperative and treasonable utterances of Stark.[3] In announcing his departure the Argus said:[4] "It is indeed a humiliating position occupied by our state, three-fourths[5] of which are loyal, to be represented in the United States senate by a blatant little peppery sympathizer with treason." A mass meeting was held at Salem at which Whiteaker's appointment was denounced[6] and the appointee charged with treason. The leaders in the meeting were loyal Democrats of prominence, such as R. P. Boise, Lucien Heath, J. C. Peebles, C. N. Terry and Harvey Gordon. Sufficient opposition was aroused to delay Stark's being seated by the Senate until in February, 1862.[7]

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[1] Union, June 8.

Encouraged by Southern victories, as time passed on, the Oregon secessionists became bolder in expression and more active in demonstrations against the Government. Before the end of 1861, the Oregonian announced the existence of the Knights of the Golden Circle in Oregon.[8] After sketching the movement in the Eastern States and its purposes, the editor declared that many of the leaders among those in Oregon opposing and denouncing the Government, were Knights of the Golden Circle. The opposition press made light of this and similar charges, but the denials failed to carry conviction, especially in the light of later disclosures. The secession papers became so offensively treasonable in expression, that early in 1862 the Government began the suppression of the worst of them. The Albany Democrat, the first to be suppressed, referred to Confederate leaders as "the glory of the land" and to the Union soldiers as "the enemy." The Corvallis Union called the Northern soldiers "white niggers," and continually referred to Lincoln as a usurper and perjured tyrant. It reproduced a long article from the London Times, arguing in favor of a separation of the Union. The Portland Advertiser, "the poor, sniveling, secession sheet," according to Parson Adams, reprinted approvingly an article from the London Herald ridiculing President Lincoln and lauding President Davis.[1] A much quoted expression from the Advertiser was this: "We have every reason to invoke the Divine interposition to stay the hand of Lincoln, paralyze his efforts and thus put a stop to the unnatural, intestine war that he has inaugurated and carried on."

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[1] Statesman, Nov. 11.

[2] Oregonian, Nov. 9.

[3] Oregonian, Nov. 30.

[4] Argus, Nov. 23.

[5] Nine-tenths were loyal in May, according to Adams!

[6] A thrust, evidently at Judge Deady, was given in the statement—"We hold Gov. Whiteaker less responsible than the judicial functionary in whose hands the Executive is as clay in the hands of the potter."

[7] When Stark's credentials were presented to the Senate, papers from Oregon citizens protesting his disloyalty were also submitted. All were referred to the Judiciary Committee, which on Feb. 7, reported in favor of seating him, Senator Lyman Trumbull presenting a minority report. The majority report was adopted. At the same time, Stark asked for a full investigation of the charges made. The committee appointed reported the charges substantiated and action was brought for a recommital of the case, but failed.

[8] Oregonian, Nov. 9, 1861.

There appeared in the Oregonian of October 19, 1861, a long letter from Jesse Applegate on the situation in Oregon. He stated that after having traveled extensively through the state during the summer and fall he was forced to the conclusion that there were many disunionists in "this young Oregon, which, scarcely out of the shell of Territorial pupilage, stinks with an element foul and corrupt, bordering, I may at least safely say, on actual treason, whose rankness 'smells to heaven'." He asserted that almost anywhere, toryism was disgustingly common; that inquiry among a certain class would bring protestation that they were all Union men—the kind that got their Union from the Corvallis printing office." He pointed out that the old school, party hidebound Democrats, would read only that to which they had been schooled and accustomed. The Democratic party had so long been dominated by the pro-slavery element that they had learned to feed on what reeked with slavery and secession. Hence they naturally clung to the Corvallis Union, Albany Democrat and Portland Advertiser, in preference to the Salem Statesman, Portland Times and Jacksonville Sentinel, and their ideas of the national crisis were shaped accordingly. Applegate gave a striking picture of conditions as he observed them. Demonstrating as it does so forcibly what an influence was exerted by these unconfessed secession papers, extracts of this letter, written by a man of such standing and influence, are here reproduced at some length:

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[1] See Argus, March 1, March 22.

> "If you would obtain a correct idea of the universal influence of the press, go among the people at large and behold the thirst for newspaper reading. As you pass along the road in hot summer weather, when the farmer has returned from his work and the doors are thrown open to invite the precious breeze, on the porch or just within you will see the man of the house with his paper, swallowing down the editorial as a more delicious morsel than the viands preparing for his dinner. If he is a Democrat of the Jo Lane school, it is the Corvallis Union, the Advertiser or some paper of that character, upon which he feeds; and whatever he finds in its sound columns, if not there condemned, whether murder, rebellion or treason, it is Democratic and good enough for him. Go into his house, and upon a table, packed away in a shelf or perhaps spread upon the wall, you will find the source of his political information and faith in a formidable array of Advertisers, Oregon Democrats or something of that kind. Possibly a stray number of the Oregonian or Statesman may be found containing the President's message; if so, probably the conversation will turn upon the message and you will find in nine cases in ten that he has not read it, but merely what his paper said about it. 'I commenced to read it but got disgusted with the Hell-fired thing. I haven't got time to read such d——d abolition stuff and I thought if God would forgive me for commencin' to read sich trash, I'd not do so no more. I'm a Union man, but I don't go nothing on coercion. I think Lincoln's done more to destroy the Union than any other man. I think the abolitionists better mind their own business; and if they don't, I tell you the Southerners will larn um a lesson. Talk about Lincoln whippin' the South! the Northern men is all cowards.'"

During these early months of the great struggle—a period of uncertainty and confusion throughout the Union—the Statesman, more than any other Oregon paper, displayed the rare gift of the interpretation of events and of the character of the men intimately connected with them. Indeed the keenness of political insight displayed, in the light of the history of after years, seems almost to have approached the prophetic. In a long editorial, October 21, 1861, on "President Lincoln," it declared that he, almost alone of the great actors in the drama, was without any incentive to ordinary ambition; that he was President for four years embracing a period weightier with events than the seventy years of all his predecessors. "If he can pass through that period with respectable success, he will have laid up in the storehouse of history greater fame than either Jackson or Washington derived from the Presidential office. If he fails, the future will attribute it to his incapacity rather than the power of his adversaries and he will never be forgiven the crime of being born. Believing the perpetuation of the Union to be the sole object of the President, we desire to foster no sentiment adverse to the design." More striking examples of the political prescience of the Statesman were to follow as the struggle progressed. Such sentiments as these, coming from a source from which had formerly emanated the most violent strictures of the Black Republicans, tended toward making the Statesman the recognized champion of the Union cause in Oregon.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNION MOVEMENT IN 1862

Writing in the summer of 1861 upon the general political effects of the death of Stephen A. Douglas, Bush advised the followers of the fallen leader in Oregon as to the proper course of action to be pursued by them.[1] He referred to the fact that many Republicans and Democrats had pledged themselves in good faith to ignore party aspirations in the presence of the rebellion, but gave it as his opinion that as long as there were offices to be filled, party affiliations would not become extinct. Considering the fact that Bush had been in office steadily for a decade, he spoke as one having authority. Therefore, while acknowledging the general manifestation of a disposition to ignore the past and organize upon the basis of Union against disunion, he advised the Douglas men of Oregon to maintain their identity, holding it to be safer for them to hold themselves aloof as a reserve force in case disunion should be about to carry the day. He admitted that the plan of three adverse parties was a somewhat novel feature in politics and a rather difficult one to maintain, but he held it to be an eminently safe one against conspiracy and sudden revolution such as seceders meditated for Oregon and California. Bush then made this striking prediction—a further illustration of his political prescience: "When this contest, be it long or short, is closed, the men who have trained under the great political captain (Douglas) will find themselves the nucleus of a radical party, opposed to the federal element grown strong in the centralizing work of crushing out rebellion." Awaiting that time, he advised his fellow Democrats that they could serve the country better by independent action.

But within a few short months, the editor of the Statesman saw things very differently. As has been indicated, the radical Democrats were fervently appealing for party reorganization in the hope of gaining control of the state. Bush evidently became somewhat uneasy at the effect their overtures might have. In September he wrote the Statesman from the East, whither he had gone: "I notice the secessionists of Oregon are anxious to 'reorganize the Democratic party'. I hope no honest man will put his foot into that pitfall. . . What more occasion have we in Oregon for defunct political parties than they have in Kentucky or Missouri? Do you hear of Democrats, Republicans or Whigs there? They have two parties and but two—Union and disunion. Let us so divide in Oregon while this dreadful danger hangs over our common country." In its issue of December 2 the Statesman declared expressly for the formation of a Union party, uniting all the Union men of the state, as the only way to defeat treason. Oregon was declared to be stronger proportionately for secession than was Missouri. The need of united action on the part of Union men was therefore evident.

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[1] Statesman, June 24, 1861.

In September the Oregonian had expressed the conviction that party lines and party triumphs should be forgotten in the one great cause of saving the Union.[1] No suggestions were offered as to how the Union movement should be effected. The first definite suggestions made public for such are to be found in an unsigned article appearing in the Weekly Oregonian[2] of November 23, contributed by a resident of the southern part of the state. Immediate organization was urged in order to check the disloyal plans of the enemy. The plan of procedure suggested as the most practicable was the immediate formation of state central Union committees, with correspondence committees in and for every county. These committees were to ignore party lines absolutely. There should be no indecision in this respect, no matter who demurred or what his party prominence. It should be clearly understood that the integrity of the Union was not to be immolated at the shrine of any party. The committees were to distribute among the voters the speeches of such men as Holt, Dickinson and Everett and other Union documents; also to labor with honest men likely to be controlled by old party associations, to get them to realize the enormity of the situation, with the disgrace which would result if they adhered to the false advice of pretended "Union but peace" men.

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[1] Oregonian, Sep. 21, editorial, "The Duty of Patriots."

[2] The publication of the Oregonian as a daily paper began in February, 1861. Hereafter, however, as heretofore, the weekly edition is the one referred to unless otherwise specified.

The Argus spoke, December 21 in a leader on the "Next June Election." That there should be united action on the part of those supporting the Administration, was freely admitted. It disapproved the idea held, as it said, by some Republicans that a full Republican ticket should be nominated without taking any steps toward securing the co-operation of the loyal portion of other political parties. However, it strongly objected to the plan of attempting to blend two parties, hitherto antagonistic and unrelentingly hostile on vital issues, into one party, upon a common platform. It declared that no bond of union would be strong enough to hold them together; that it would be building a structure that sooner or later must be torn down. It favored one of two plans: first, the nomination of a Union ticket by a state Republican convention; or, second, the holding of separate conventions by the Republicans and Union Democrats—these two conventions to confer together and agree upon a ticket satisfactory to all parties.

The partisan Republican attitude was clearly expressed in a letter to the Argus written by C. Hoel of Salem, dated December 20. It was directly in answer to the Statesman, which had said that it would willingly accord the Republicans a monopoly of the renown if it thought they they, single-handed, could best conserve the Union's existence. But it was not to be assumed, added the Statesman, that the Republican party would be able to do all the fighting, furnish all the means and do all the voting necessary to putting down the rebellion. Hoel replied that if the proposition to be inferred from this were true, the portion of the people carrying the elections would have to pay all the taxes. He aptly reminded the Statesman that when, during the last Indian War it had insisted that all military appointments should be confined to the Democrats, it did not claim that the Democrats should furnish all the means for the war or even do all the fighting. It was bluntly intimated to the Statesman that the proposition that the minority is free from obligation to support the Government except upon the condition that it should rule the majority, was the doctrine of the secessionists. Hoel then addressed himself to his fellow Republicans. He told them that they had elected a President and that he himself intended to remain a Republican until traitors should learn that the success of an opposition party was not an excuse for rebellion. The Republicans, he said, had done nothing to make themselves odious. They were loyal, they were in the ascendency in Oregon if any party was, and a due regard to their principles, their past labors for the good of the country, made without pay while others were growing fat in office, demanded that they have something to say as to the way and manner of forming a *new* Union party. The Republican party was declared already to be a Union party and Hoel asserted that if a new one was to be organized for the purpose of accommodating the prejudices of other Union men, and to divide the offices, he claimed as much right as the Statesman to say how it should be formed. He was for a Union arrangement, through the Republican convention, by conference or otherwise, but not for a direct Union party, in which politicians who had all to gain and nothing to lose, would come up as leaders.

Many Republicans had learned from past experience to be suspicious of overtures from Democratic sources looking toward coalition. They remembered that their party organization had long been obstructed and delayed in Oregon because of unnatural alliances with opposing factions. At last they had achieved that distinct party organization and it had proved its power. And now, just when the time had come to enjoy the spoils of victory so long hoped for, they were asked by their old opponents to cast off their political affiliations for the good of the country. It is hardly to be wondered at that the motives of those insisting on the scheme of a Union party were questioned by some. Since the death of Baker, the Republicans were again without a commanding leader and their fear was not unwarranted that Bush would make himself the power in the new organization that he had been in the old Democratic regime. This apprehension was clearly manifested in a private letter[1] from Dr. James McBride to D. W. Craig, now editor of the Argus.[2] McBride expressed his fear that the Statesman would secure the nomination on the Union ticket for state printer, in preference to Craig. "You are our dependence among the Republicans" wrote McBride, "and if you fail, all is lost. 'Tis not only a temporary loss, but a loss of principle—indeed all those valuable principles for which we have contended for years. And the Statesman, under the conduct of the 'Clique' as in days of yore, will merge the Union party into that shapeless thing called Douglas Democracy; will cringe and manage and fish for some modified Democratic and pro-slavery humbug, and finally, when Republicans won't bear it any longer, it will call for a 'reunion of the Democracy.' And so all the factions will unite again and leave us to reorganize and fight the battles over again. Ten years will not elapse before all this will be done if the Statesman is elected printer; perhaps not five. . . Stir up your friends with a red hot pitchfork. Write to W. L. [Adams] to be up and doing to save himself and Republicanism."

In view of the grave crisis confronting the country, the majority of the Republicans were inclined to allow the future of their party to take care of itself. They wanted united action now, and if it could be best secured in a Union party, they would acquiesce. The Oregonian indicated that the manner or plan of union was in the hands of Republican State Central Committee and promised to abide by the judgment and action of its members.[3]

In January a formal call was issued for the holding of a Union State Convention.[4] It was addressed to those who were in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war for the suppression of rebellion, who thought more of country than of party prejudice and who were willing to unite for the election of a ticket upon such a basis without reference to former political associations. All such voters were requested to meet in the several precincts of the various counties on March 22 to choose delegates to county conventions to be held March 29, which in turn would select delegates to a state convention to be held April 9 at Eugene, for the purpose of nominating a Union ticket for state officers and member of Congress. The apportionment of delegates for the various counties was given. The call was signed, first, by H. W. Corbett, E. D. Shattuck and W. C. Johnson, as the Republican State Central Committee; second, by Samuel Hanna, as chairman of the Democratic State Central Committee; third by forty-three more or less prominent members of the two parties, among whom were A. C. Gibbs, Alonzo Leland, John McCraken, W. S. Ladd, R. J. Ladd, S. G. Reed, David Powell, S. J. McCormick, A. L. Lovejoy, D. P. Thompson, R. P. Boise, C. N. Terry, Lucien Heath, B. F. Harding, J. R. McBride, Benj. Simpson, Jos. Magone, R. C. Geer, B. J. Pengra, E. N. Cooke, I. R. Moores.

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[1] February 16, 1862.

[2] Adams had been appointed collector of customs at Astoria by the new Administration.

[3] Oregonian, Jan. 14, 1862, Editorial, "The Demands of the Hour."

[4] See Argus, Jan. 18.

There appeared, following the call, a statement to the Republicans of Oregon made by the state committee, explaining and defending its action in not calling a regular Republican convention as it had been instructed to do. The members of the committee disavowed the right or desire to dissolve the Republican organization or to recant any Republican principles. But being unwilling to do anything to distract the Union sentiment in the approaching canvass, they deemed it unwise to call a party convention with a view to the support of a distinctively Republican ticket. An appeal was made to the loyal people of the state, to Republicans especially, to support zealously the Union movement. In the same issue, the Argus, despite its objections to such a plan, came out in earnest support of the proposed action. In accordance with the call, notices of county Union conventions began to appear. They were signed after the manner of the general call for the state

—by the county central committees of both parties and then by a number of representative Republicans and Democrats.

The representation between the two parties at the Union state convention seemed to be pretty evenly distributed, but the Democrats figured rather more prominently in the choice of officials and in the various proceedings than the Republicans.[1] The ticket was nominated as follows: for Congressman, John R. McBride of Yamhill, a Republican; governor, Addison C. Gibbs of Multnomah, Democrat; secretary, Samuel E. May of Jackson, Republican; printer, Harvey Gordon of Marion, Democrat; and connected with the Statesman; treasurer, E. N. Cooke of Marion, Republican. The platform adopted consisted of a short series of ringing resolutions in support of a vigorous prosecution of the war and opposing any peace other than the honorable one sure to come "when rebels and their sympathizers submit to the constitutionally elected authorities of the Republic."

As was to be expected, the nominations made by the convention were not wholly satisfactory. It was charged that McBride, a Republican, was nominated by Democratic votes and that Gibbs, Democrat, was placed on the ticket by Republicans in direct opposition to the wish of three-fourths of the Democrats.[2] Jesse Applegate, ultra-loyal, but irreconcilable as usual, wrote to a friend—"In obedience to a 'higher law' than that of conventions, I shall certainly strike the name of Mr. Gibbs from my ticket."[3] The securing of the office of state printer by the Statesman was indicative of the fact that the Democratic side of the partnership was able to enforce its wishes in the division of the offices.[4] The Oregonian stated that it was sorry to observe a manifest disposition on the part of some who had professed themselves Union men, to discourage the Union ticket. It was intimated that a movement was on foot to put a People's Union ticket in the field, which was stigmatized as a covert attack on the loyal spirit of the state and designed alone to render assistance to the secession party, falsely styling themselves Democrats.[1]

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[1] Proceedings, in Oregonian, April 19.

[2] Private letter: Jesse Applegate to M. P. Deady, April 13, 1862. "McBride is the representative of the Baker or rather office holders' interests in the Republican party. He is an amiable man of fair character, but his talents, acquirements and force of character are not equal to the position. . . But to him the objections are neither loud nor deep. . . and the vote that will be given to him will fairly represent the strength of the fusion. Not so with the candidate for governor", etc.

[3] Private letter: Jesse Applegate to M. P. Deady, April 13, 1862.

[4] In private conversation, Judge Williams said the Democrats got the best offices. He attributed the generosity of the Republicans to the fact that they wished to tempt the Democrats to stay in the Union organization and thus prevent the re-organization of the Oregon Democracy.

Editor J. H. Slater of the Corvallis Union issued a call to the Democracy of the state to meet in convention at Corvallis, April 15. The invitation to participate was made to include all "who are opposed to the political policy of the present Administration and who are in favor of the establishment of the Union as it *was* and the supremacy of the Constitution as made by the Fathers of the Republic." The Argus charged that the use of the past tense of the verb in "was," was an acknowledgment that the Union had ceased to exist and was a recognition of secession.[2] The keynote of the whole obstruction policy of the Oregon Democracy as now constituted was given in the reference to the supremacy of the Constitution. That the Democratic call was largely signed and by many former Douglas Democrats who had refused to join the Union movement, is indicated in the following paragraph from the Argus of March 1: "Some are expressing surprise at the large number of names attached to the rebel call for a secession convention at Corvallis that were formerly of what were called the Douglas Democrats."

The following was the ticket nominated at Corvallis: for Congressman, A. E. Wait; governor, John F. Miller; printer, A. Noltner; secretary, Geo. T. Vining; treasurer, J. B. Greer. Of these men, Wait was the only one who had been considered as a Douglas Democrat and he was not distinctively so. The editor of the Dalles Mountaineer was a delegate to the convention and a participant in its proceedings. The characterization of the situation by him, which may be credited with being comparatively unprejudiced, is enlightening.[1] He noted that, as in all such assemblages, two elements were at work—the one actuated by patriotic impulses, the other knowing no higher motive than a greedy thirst for the spoils. There was a third element, he continued, which was steadily kept in the background, but yet, such was its irrepressible character, that it would occasionally make itself manifest. "We will be understood as alluding to the Secessionists, the number of whom was decidedly large. This was shown in the vote for governor, state printer and in fact for every office outside of Congressman. . . . From the first it was apparent that the name of Judge Wait was to be used as a make-weight for the balance of the ticket."

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[1] Oregonian, May 10.
[2] Argus, Feb. 15.

The platform adopted was a good illustration of how cleverly and plausibly a bad cause can be presented and of how real motives and animus may be sugar-coated. The sentiment of the immortal Jackson—"The Union must be preserved"—was declared to be the watchword that the Democracy of Oregon sent forth to animate the masses in the hour of their country's peril, to rally for the supremacy of the Constitution, the perpetuity of the Union and the preservation of the rights of the States and of the people. All "Constitutional efforts" were advocated for the suppression of rebellion and restoration of the Union. In nearly every resolution, the sacred name of the Constitution was invoked as a rallying cry. Peaceable adjustment along "Constitutional and legal lines" was the demand made by the Democrats. In this platform, in 1862, the Republican Administration was charged not only with conducting the war for the emancipation of the Negroes, but also for their enfranchisement. The corrupt coalitions of "so-called Democrats and abolitionists," which had resulted in placing sectional men in the councils of the Nation, were condemned.

The Union ticket was overwhelmingly successful in the June election, the majorities ranging from 3177, for McBride for Congressman to 4155 for Cooke for treasurer, these two Republican members of the ticket receiving the lowest and highest vote, respectively. The Union candidates carried every county in the state with the exception of Josephine, which gave Miller a majority of 10 over Gibbs for governor. The Union legislative tickets were elected almost entire. As an illustration of how even the political extremists put away personal and political prejudices of the past and joined hands in support of the Union in 1862, the private correspondence between Jesse Applegate and Judge Deady presents striking evidence. Deady, so recently a radical, pro-slavery Democrat and a delegate to the Charleston Convention, voted for McBride and the state Union ticket. Applegate, uncompromising and radical Republican, relented[1] and voted the whole Union ticket.[2] The paean of victory sung by the Oregonian, June 7, is suggestive of the high tension of the campaign and is all the more significant, in that the language of the paper had been noticeably tempered after Dryer laid down the editorial pen. The fierce exultation of victory gave as full expression to the elemental passions as would have been displayed by the ancestral tribesmen of the writer in the forests of Germany.[3]

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[1] Account reprinted in Oregonian, May 3.

The somewhat tortuous history of the many edged Viva Voce ballot law was further indicated in this election. After the election of 1858, the Argus in denouncing the evils of the old British and Oregon Democratic method of voting, declared that owing to the length of the ticket, the polls were kept open in Oregon City until 12 o'clock at night and were then closed without recording the votes of numbers who had been waiting for hours for an opportunity to vote. The crowding, squeezing and jamming around the polls was declared to be excessive all day long.[4] For a radical change of view, note the following from the same source, following the Union ticket victory:[1] "The Viva Voce system, in spite of manifest imperfections, has once for all proved itself a good institution, and some in this state who helped forge the bolt, gnashed their teeth to see it so successfully turned against them, now that they are in a weak minority and an evil cause."

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[1] Supra, p. 208.

[2] Applegate to Deady, June 8, 1862: "You are right, I did relent and voted the Union ticket straight. I did it upon neighbor Estes' principle. He said—'I do not like some of the Union candidates—in fact I hate some of them, but I hate the secessionists worse.'"

[3] "Rejoice ye sons of freedom. Let the Heavens resound. . . Let the imps of secession hide their deformed heads in everlasting shame and disgrace. . . Run and hide, ye diminutive emmets of disunion. . . The day of your judgment has come. . . In a word, you are 'dead and d——d.'"

[4] Argus, June 12, 1858.

It was the business of the legislature which met in September to elect a United States senator to complete the term to which Col. Baker had been elected and in which Stark was temporarily serving by appointment. In the organization of the session, Dr. Wilson Bowlby, Republican, was elected president of the senate, and Joel Palmer, Union Democrat, speaker of the house. J. R. McBride at once introduced a set of strong resolutions proclaiming loyalty to the Union and defiance to traitors, which were unanimously adopted in both houses. One resolution denounced "the weak and wicked scheme of a Pacific Confederacy." Another asserted that the issues of the times demanded that patriots eschew partisan questions of the past and unite in support of the Government. There were but three members of the legislature who "bore the stain of secession or marks of treasonable proclivities."[2] And of these, two were holdovers in the senate.

The inaugural address of Gibbs, Oregon's "war governor," was virile and to the point, breathing aggressive loyalty and a firm determination to support the National Executive in every way. In contrast to this was the expiring message of Whiteaker, extended, and marked by a doleful wail anent the wicked war, justifying the South in its point of view.[3]

Balloting for senator began September 11. The recognized leading candidates from the first were, B. F. Harding, member of the old Salem Clique, Judge Williams and Rev. Thos. H. Pearne, editor of the Pacific Christian Advocate. The first ballot stood: Harding, 7; Pearne, 9; Williams, 7; E. L. Applegate, 8; Orange Jacobs, 5; Whiteaker, 3 (representing the above mentioned secession members,) with a few scattering votes.[1] The tenth ballot—Harding 12, Williams 12, Pearne 10, Jesse Applegate 10, scattering 5; the sixteenth—Harding 15, Jacobs 23, Williams 5, Whiteaker 3. This put Jacobs, a radical Republican, within three votes of the required majority. A motion to adjourn till the following day was carried by a majority of one, amid "considerable excitement." On the thirtieth ballot Harding was elected, receiving 28 votes. H. W. Corbett was his principal opponent at the last, representing the Republican element of the legislature. However, Harding received some Republican votes, including that of J. R. McBride.

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[1] Argus, June 7, 1862.

[2] Oregonian, Sep. 13.

[3] Statesman, Sep. 15.

In commenting upon the result, the Oregonian,[2] while claiming that Harding was not the choice of a large portion of the citizens, acknowledged that he was a good Union man, which was the only qualification necessary. In view of the fact that many Republicans claimed, that as a matter of courtesy the vacancy occasioned by Senator Baker's death should have been filled by a man of the same party, the Oregonian held that the election of Harding fully demonstrated the sincerity of the Republican members in their professions of love for the Union party, especially as they could have elected a radical member of their own party had they united for that purpose. The election was cheerfully acquiesced in by the Argus, without ifs or ands.[3] Deady summed up the situation publicly as follows: "Between them (Harding, Williams and Pearne) there is not much political difference, each running as an unconditional Union man. Harding is of Salem and the other two from Portland and much of the real rivalry was between those places; and Salem, with the aid of her reliable friends, the surrounding 'cow counties,' as usual, triumphed."[4] Privately, Deady said the election was a "steady-going, quiet affair," explaining that there were no wits nor wags in the assembly and many of them were "God-fearing and prosy."[1] With two members of the Salem Clique now representing Oregon in the United States senate, the election tended to show further how the old organization Democrats were able to make patriotism profitable politically, while they were demanding that party lines be wholly obliterated for the purpose of saving the Union.

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[1] Statesman, Sep. 22.
[2] Oregonian, Sep. 20.
[3] Argus, Sep. 20.
[4] Correspondence, Sep. 15, to San Francisco Bulletin.

At the Union State Convention held in April, an executive committee of five consisting of Henry Failing, B. F. Harding, Hiram Smith, Geo. H. Williams and S. Heulat, had been appointed to manage the campaign, but no permanent party organization had been effected. On October 11 a meeting was held at the state house, attended by members of the legislature and other citizens for the purpose of effecting such organization.[2] A state central committee was appointed and a regular party organization known as the "Union Party" formally launched. Speeches were made by Senator-elect Harding, Gov. Gibbs, E. L. Applegate, R. P. Boise and J. R. McBride. Resolutions were passed strongly endorsing Lincoln's Administration. As will presently be shown, it was at just this time that Bush was beginning mildly to criticize the Administration he had so aggressively supported. In harmony with the critical attitude which he was preparing to assume, he deprecated and belittled this meeting, maintaining that permanent organization was ill-advised as no one could tell what new issues would arise by 1864, necessitating a realignment of parties. To those who knew Bush, the mere suggestion was a tacit announcement of a policy of opposition on the part of the Statesman.

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[1] Deady to Nesmith, Washington, D. C., Nov. 22.

Nesmith, College Hill, Ohio, to Deady, October 1: "The Telegraph has informed me of the election of Harding as my colleague. I would have preferred Bush but am perfectly satisfied with a result which I feared at one time would make me the colleague of the 'Holy Cobbler'." (Pearne.)

[2] Statesman, Oct. 20.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ISSUES OF WAR

It has been seen that from the beginning of the war, the Statesman had been most energetic in support of the Administration and most aggressive in demanding a vigorous war policy. It not only supported the Administration but attempted to lead, or rather, drive it. The first manifestation of dissatisfaction, in fact, was occasioned by what Bush termed the one remarkable phase of the war—the leniency of federal authorities toward traitors. He complained that the most notorious and virulent offenders, taken even in arms, were almost invariably treated more like honored guests than felons that they were. He maintained that there was such a thing as sinning against humanity by overdoses of kindness and that the war would prove a contemptible failure if a "sickly sentimentalism" should let the "demons of secession go free, to repeat again the dread tragedy of rebellion."[1]

For the first time, the Statesman distinctly questions the Government's policy in an editorial, October 6, 1862, on "The President's Proclamation." This referred to the preliminary proclamation issued September 22 by Lincoln, that unless the inhabitants of the revolting states returned to their allegiance by January 1, the slaves should be declared free. In the first place, such a policy at this time was held to be unnecessary and impracticable. But, more to the point, were the words: "It is not the loss that will fall upon the slave states that we object to. . . . but the Government will have on hand at the close of the war a 'Negro question' which will present more difficult phases than any shape in which the question has ever yet been seen." Another instance was this of the accuracy with which Bush foresaw and foretold the results which were to grow out of the war. From this time on the Statesman became more and more critical of Lincoln's policies. In a private letter to Nesmith, Deady wrote, October 22: "Bush is turning 'oppositionist' and as a matter of course is regaining his health. Supporting a government is not his specialty."

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[1] Statesman, June 30, 1863, editorial, "What Shall be Done with the Traitors?"

From the latter part of 1862 onward, from the exigencies arising from the prosecution of a great civil war, many difficult questions of policy arose, as regards both men and measures. The solution of these various questions disclosed the political differences existing in the ranks of those supporting the Government, which had thus far been scarcely noticeable. Opposition to Lincoln's administration began to organize. As representative of this general opposition, and showing the several grounds on which it was based, the attitude of the Oregon Statesman furnishes an excellent example, and as such will be followed in some detail.

At the same time that Emancipation was being forecasted as an issue, the personal element was also being injected into the situation by the removal of General McClellan, a Democrat, as commander-in-chief of the armies.[1] Bush's loyalty to McClellan led him to criticize Lincoln severely for trying out so many generals.[2] He accused him of weakness and vacillation in yielding his better judgment to the clamor of radicals and fanatics of whom he said: "the nigger is their chief stock in trade." Referring to the Union Democratic victories in the fall elections in the East, Bush interpreted them, not as an expression against the war but as "simply a victory against party dogmas in the conduct of the war."[3] He contended that the radical Republicans or politicians who had elected Lincoln had cried, "all parties are dead," adding sotto voce, "except the Republican party." Where they were not in the majority they had said, "away with parties," but where they were independent they had run Republican tickets. Democrats were expected not only to cease to become Democrats but to become Republicans, supporting the Administration in all its party measures,—a demand "too impudent for concession." The result had been that the loyal Democrats had formed Union Democratic tickets wherever Republicans had made party nominations and had elected them so generally as to strike the country with complete surprise. Bush thus gave evidence of growing restiveness under his close associations with Republicanism. As a striking sequel to Dr. McBride's prediction made in February,[1] is the following extract from a letter of Deady to Nesmith, dated November 22: "Bush is breaking ground against his Republican brethren and the time is not far distant when he and they will quit the entente cordial—it only exists in name now."

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[1] "We have the news of McClellan's removal here. People and papers who know something about the merits of the matters are expending their opinions freely pro and con and it looks as if the matter would be taken into the next Presidential election, provided that political carnival is not deferred until after the war."—Deady to Nesmith, Nov. 22.

[2] Statesman, Nov. 3, editorial, "The President and His Generals."

[3] Statesman, Nov. 17, editorial, "The Lesson of the Hour."

The Argus strongly supported the policy of the Emancipation Proclamation and on December 6, 1862, for opposing it made a venomous attack on Bush in an editorial under the suggestive caption: "The Lion's Skin Torn From a Donkey."[2] This editorial, while intemperate in language and radical in its presentation, presents so good a view, both of the attitude of the Republican radicals toward the Statesman at this time and of the position which Bush had assumed toward the Administration, that it is freely quoted in the following excerpts:

> "Now that it has made all the money out of the Union party it expects to, this sheet has thrown off its 'Union' cloak far enough to show its teeth which are now gnashing in real Corvallis Union style, at the President for proclaiming freedom to the slaves, at Congress for abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, and at the Government generally for adopting what it terms the policy of 'freedom-loving Austria' for suspending the writ of habeas corpus. . . . This sheet lets no opportunity slip to charge the Government with peculation and fraud, to cry down and depreciate its currency,[3] to rail at anti-slavery men as abolitionists. . . . and in short to play into the hands of rebellion by such sly jeers and villainous false-

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[1] Supra, p. 206.

[2] "Bush and Little Preach (Billy Adams) are throwing mud at each other in fine style. The Statesman begins to read as of yore."—Deady to Nesmith, Dec. 18. (Adams still wrote for the Argus though Craig was now in direct management of the paper.)

[3] The Argus vigorously urged the acceptance and use of the legal tender notes at par.

> hoods as Pat Malone[1] has been retailing in much better style for months past. While such men as Malone deserve to be beaten with rods, he of the Salem concern deserves to be thrashed with scorpions. . . . The President's blow at the cause of the rebellion. . . . gave the secession squirt at Salem a long coveted opportunity to plunge his carcass into the stinking pool of treason, with his 'Union' cloak drawn closely round his breech as a temptation to real Union men to follow. The same instinct and innate love of doing something dirty that led this black-hearted villain and white-livered scoundrel, among our Oregon volunteers in 1855, to stab Whigs has now prompted the whining cur to pin his nose to the seat of McClellan's breeches and raise a yell over his removal as a persecution of a Democrat. . . . The whole object of this sheet is to assist in breaking down the Administration. . . . It is for the Union if slavery can be preserved, to again stink and rule the government. . . . Some men may differ with us, but we have no time to argue with those who are green enough to wish to carry adders in their bosoms till they are stung to death . . . If there is any hope for the success of pure principles in Oregon, Union men must scotch this new head of the hydra-headed snake of secession at once."

On the other hand, the feeling manifested toward Bush by the organized Democracy was no more cordial, as is made evident by Malone in the Corvallis Union: "The political harlot of the Salem Vampire has had a new revelation! He has learned a new 'lesson' from the signs of the 'hour.' But he has reached the end of his tether. The wrigglings of the reptile in his efforts to steal into the Democratic party only breeds a big disgust."[2]

In defending himself and like Union Democrats, Bush showed how zealously they had upheld the Administration and only hesitated now at the manifestation of its growing partisan tendencies. He charged that there was a growing movement to reorganize the government as well as a rebellion to destroy it, referring to the determined efforts to free the Negroes. He alluded to Gov. Andrew's threat that Massachusetts would give no more troops unless the slaves were emancipated, and intimated that those stood better by the Administration who criticized and acquiesced than those who coerced, overawed and bullied it against its convictions. He declared he should continue to stand by the Administration in all matters of right and criticise it when he thought it was wrong.[1] In allusion to the offer of a bet which had been made that within three months Bush would be a red hot secessionist, he replied that while he was in favor of maintaining the Government at every hazard, he wouldn't destroy it, either to enslave or liberate "niggers;" that he believed it to be a government of white men, and that if the liberties of that race could be preserved, he regarded it of comparatively little consequence what fate might betide the "nigger."[2] He declared that the radicals' test of loyalty had become, not, "Are you for the Union?" but "Are you for Emancipation?"[3] As for him, he was for the Union first and the Union only. The Emancipation Proclamation[4] and the removal of McClellan were the two rocks on which broke the Statesman's loyalty to Lincoln.

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[1] Editor of the Corvallis Union at this time.

[2] Quoted in Argus, Feb. 14, 1863.

In March, 1863, Bush laid down his scepter as editor of the Statesman. C. P. Crandall and E. M. Waite secured the paper, the former acting as editor. The policy continued to be that which had been adopted by Bush—that of criticism of the Administration. In November of the same year, the Argus and the Statesman were consolidated under the name of Statesman, the paper being published by the Oregon Printing & Publishing Company, the directors of which were J. W. P. Huntington, Rufus Mallory, D. W. Craig, C. P. Crandall and C. N. Terry.[5] Radical Republicans and Douglas Democrats were thus associated together in the directorate. Loyalty to the Union was reaffirmed and with the change of management the tone of the paper changed. There was no more depreciation of Lincoln and laudation of McClellan. The Statesman resumed its unwavering allegiance of 1861.

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[1] Statesman, Dec. 1, 1862, editorial, "Standing by the Administration."

[2] Ibid., Dec. 8.

[3] Statesman, Dec. 15.

[4] "After 12 o'clock to-night I suppose there will be no slaves in the rebellious states—so Abraham's proclamation says. The shackles will fall at his word, I 'spect."—Bush to Deady, Dec. 31.

[5] Statesman, Nov. 2.

As far as actual political events were concerned, the year 1863 was an uneventful one in Oregon. There were no political campaigns—no elections. However, it was a critical year. The various fortunes of the conflict in the East were closely followed in distant Oregon. As the prospect for the success of the Union arms grew darker, secession sympathizers in Oregon became more rampant. The Dalles Mountaineer, a Douglas Democrat paper, announced near the end of the year that six Oregon newspapers had been suppressed as treasonable,[1] in the following order: Albany Democrat, Jacksonville Gazette, Eugene Register, Albany Inquirer, Portland Advertiser and Corvallis Union. Their suppression was acquiesced in by the Mountaineer, but it expressed a doubt as to whether they had done half as much injury to the Union cause as the blind partisan Republican papers which had steadily endeavored to instil the belief that to be a friend of the Union it was necessary to subscribe to the doctrines of such crazy fanatics as Wm. Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips. It charged that the aim of "these miserable apologies for newspapers" had been to force every man either into the abolition or secession ranks, and that apparently it had been a matter of indifference with them which of the traitorous factions he joined. Evidence is thus furnished from another source of the Union Democratic sentiment against emancipation.

A series of resolutions was introduced October 2, 1862, in the Confederate Congress and referred to the committee on foreign affairs, recognizing the practical neutrality of the States of California and Oregon and the Territories of Washington and Nevada. The resolutions suggested the advantages which would result to the people thereof upon an immediate assertion on their part of their independence of the United States and proposed the formation of a league, offensive and defensive, between the said states and Territories and the Confederate

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[1] Quoted in Statesman, Dec. 1, 1863.

States of America.[1] It was well understood in Oregon that the plotters for a Pacific Republic were merely biding their time, waiting to strike until the further success of the Confederate armies should render the Union cause hopelessly desperate.[2] It was for this reason, together with the danger of Indian outbreaks, that the companies of the Oregon volunteer regiment of cavalry, which had been enlisted for service in the war, were retained in the Northwest.

The organization of secession sentiment in Oregon was represented in the Knights of the Golden Circle. There were about ten circles in the state—among them two at Portland, two at Salem and one each at Scio, Albany, Jacksonville and in Yamhill County.[3] Fortunately, their operations were seriously handicapped, as two spies employed by Oregon's Adjutant-General, C. A. Reed, kept him fully informed of the work and plans of the Knights. A plan to assassinate Reed and capture the arsenal and several attempts to capture government arms are declared by him to have been apprehended and frustrated. Complete lists of the membership of the order were secured and on these lists appeared the names of nearly all the prominent Democratic[4] editors and politicians. The Knights divided on the question of the overt act in connection with the scheme of a Pacific Republic. Some were anxious to raise the standard of revolt in Oregon while others dissented.

But in the dark days of 1863 the secession Democrats were not the only ones to whom the idea of an independent government on the Pacific Coast, appealed. One of the very prominent men in the state, both then and for nearly a half century afterward, a leading participant in the Union movement, argued openly in the state house with the state secretary and treasurer and before the Adjutant-General, in behalf of a Pacific Republic. "Now is the time to strike," he urged. "We are the natural allies of the South and the North will be in no position to oppose us." The Adjutant-General called him into his office and threatened him with arrest for treason if he repeated the expression of such sentiment. A few Union victories followed and the man in question made a public address in Salem in favor of upholding the Union.[1]

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[1] Reported in Statesman, Dec. 8, 1862.

[2] Conversation with Judge Williams.

[3] Statements relative to the Golden Circle are based on a personal interview with C. A. Reed, of Portland, who was Adjutant-General for Oregon during the war.

[4] In this period the term "Democratic," unmodified, refers exclusively to the Democrats who remained in the party organization and opposed the Union movement—the Democrats known as Copperheads and Secession Democrats.

In the fall of 1863, by which time a considerable number of Union Democrats had broken with the Administration, there were continued references in the press to attempts being made by the Democratic leaders to unite the various factions of their party under one standard.[2] Many were the defiant allusions made by the Statesman during this period to the Copperheads—the peace-at-any-price men, the real allies of the South. At the same time, under its new management, it attacked those who had supported the Union and who still professed to be War Democrats, but who were now in favor of leaguing themselves with the peace or Secession Democrats of the state, thus making the "tail for the snake of secession." To them, represented by such men as Bush, Harding and Thayer, it gave the name of Coppertails. The Statesman scoffed at their belief that the Copperheads would permit them to fix up a policy and platform suitable for loyal men to stand upon, and said, "The Democratic party as now constituted, is, nine-tenths of it, for peace at all events."[3] In defense of its position it quoted the platform as proposed by James O'Meara, leader of the Oregon Copperheads, the last plank of which read: "We are for peace, now and always, and shall regard any peace honorable that is conformable with the independence of the Northern States."

In the closing days of the year, the Loyal Leagues made their appearance in Oregon. In April the Statesman had reported that the New York papers announced that on March 9 a pledge was drawn up and signed by thousands of men in that city, binding the signers under the name of the Loyal National League, to an unconditional loyalty to the Government of the United States; to an unwavering support of its efforts to suppress rebellion. The League was a secret organization, established to bear the same relation to the Union cause that the Knights of the Golden Circle bore to that of the South. It was also given impetus by the action of those Union Democrats who had broken with the Administration and who were now considered obstructionists by the unconditional supporters of the war. On account of the secret nature of the organization there were no references to it of a local nature by the Republican papers until February 29, 1864, when a leader appeared in the Statesman—"Union Leagues—Golden Circles." "The Copperhead mind of this state is terribly alarmed about the introduction of the Loyal Leagues," said the Statesman, which, after showing that patriotism was the motive of the one and treason of the other, declared that there ought to be a Loyal League or Union Club in every precinct in the state.

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[1] This incident was carefully related to the writer by Mr. Reed with the request that the name be withheld.

[2] "The secessionists of this state are taking immense trouble to reorganize the 'Democratic party.' Let them reorganize till the archangel blows his trumpet—it won't make them any more numerous. . . . It is still the same old Copperhead brigade. . . . Go ahead, old snake, you can't put on a skin that won't be known and 'spotted.'"—Statesman, Dec. 7, 1863.

[3] Statesman, Dec. 14.

The "Union League of America for the State of Oregon," was organized at Portland, December 14, 1863. The initiative was taken by Governor Gibbs, the organization being effected through a dispensation granted to A. R. Elder of California by the Grand Council of that state.[1] It was provided that the Grand Council should be composed of the twenty-five persons named in the charter and of one delegate from each subordinate council in the state. The officers chosen were: Grand President, Gov. Gibbs; Vice-Presidents, E. D. Shattuck, A. G. Hovey, Stephen Coffin, Thos. Frazar, S. M. Gilmore; treasurer, Addison M. Starr; secretary, H. C. Coulson; marshal, M. F. Mulkey; sentinel, E. L. Jones; herald, E. J. Northrup. Others of prominence among the charter members were W. Lair Hill, Thos. H. Pearne, John H. Mitchell, Dr. Wilson

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[1] In July, 1909, Mr. Himes, curator of the Oregon Historical Society Collections, secured possession of the record books of the State League and of the Multnomah Council No. 2, containing in each case the constitution, proceedings and list of members. To these the writer was given access.

Bowlby, W. C. Johnson, Thos. Monteith and Hiram Smith. Dispensations were recorded for the establishment of councils throughout the state. The Drew resolution, to be noticed later, was the only matter of political significance noted in the recorded proceedings of the State Council.

The Multnomah Council, Number 2, was organized at Portland, December 28, and attained a membership of over two hundred. Judge Geo. H. Williams was elected president, Levi Anderson, vice-president, Joseph N. Dolph, assistant vice-president, and J. J. Hoffman, secretary, with other minor officers. The active political work of the League is indicated by action taken at a meeting on March 22, 1864, when a committee was elected to confer with a similar committee from Council No. 10 of South Portland to select suitable persons to be put in nomination for the various city officers. The two councils went into a joint nominating convention, March 26. At the meeting of the Multnomah Council on April 4, resolutions were introduced by J. N. Dolph and adopted, to the effect that no member of the Union League who gave his support or vote in favor of independent candidates of doubtful loyalty, should be considered a reliable Union man. This was the sequel to the action of Amory Holbrook and a few followers in bolting the regular Union nominations in Multnomah County and putting out an independent Union ticket. Division of sentiment apparently followed the passage of the above resolution. On April 12 after "animated discussion" a resolution was passed severely deprecating the conduct of certain members who had talked against the League and had endeavored to persuade persons from becoming members. At the same time, a committee was appointed to solicit the attendance of members at the next meeting, which was indicative of growing indifference. The last meeting of the Multnomah council of which record was made was held May 3, 1864.

At a special meeting of the Grand Council of the State League held April 19 a resolution proposed by Judge Williams was adopted, protesting against the appointment of J. W. Drew as paymaster in the army on the ground that he was a man of doubtful loyalty and opposed to the Administration, and asking the President to remove him. Copies of the resolution were ordered sent to the National Grand Council at Washington and to the President. This raised the ire of Senator Nesmith, largely responsible for Drew's appointment, and was the occasion of a private expression on his part on the Loyal League in general and on some of the dramatis personæ in particular. "I am ignorant of your opinion of that organization in Oregon called the Loyal League," he wrote to Deady,[1] "but I know that your sense of justice, if not your abhorrence of secret political organizations would force you to condemn so low, vile and dirty a trick. For my own part I regard the organization with more detestation than I did the Know Nothings. Its origin and perpetuation in our state is only for the benefit of such lying, dirty demagogues as Gospel Pearne and Guts Gibbs who own, control and run it in Oregon." And Nesmith, though elected to the United States Senate in 1860 as a Democrat had been loyally supporting Lincoln in the prosecution of the war. The Loyal League had a brief course in Oregon. It was organized from patriotic motives, but judging from the records of the councils examined, it found no direct mission to fulfill and dissipated its energies in little political bickerings which were its undoing.

The campaign of 1864 opened early in the year. The Union State Central Committee met at Salem, January 6, and issued a call for the various precinct and county conventions, leading up to the state convention to be held at Albany, March 30.[2] The Statesman urged all loyal men to enter upon the campaign with vigor. The Union element of the state lacked organization, it contended. The Copperheads were declared to be using all the whips and spurs of party drill—clubs, open and secret, and lodges of the Golden Circle, through which "vile lies, false teachings and rankling passion" were disseminated. Union party meetings began to be held over the state. One of the most important of the early meetings was one held at LaFayette

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[1] From College Hill, Ohio, July 18, 1864.

[2] Statesman, Jan. 11, 1864.

February 23, addressed by Judge Williams, Judge Boise and T. H. Pearne, who were the principal speakers in the campaign, on the Union party side. The meeting heartily endorsed Lincoln's policies, including his amnesty and reconstruction policy, decried the "peace, peace" cry of the opposition and denounced the Democratic party for its affiliations with secessionists.

Despite the patriotic assertions made at the time the Union movement was launched, patriotism and politics had refused to become divorced. As long as there were remunerative offices to be filled, this was inevitable. Late in 1862, Bush had claimed that the Republicans in general were insincere in their expressed desire to ignore party lines. But through all the many political vicissitudes the Statesman had succeeded in maintaining what was an apparent life lease on the lucrative office of state printer. And now the Oregonian had some very pertinent comments to make upon the subject of non-partisan patriotism.[1] It assented to the idea that the Union party should be conducted without reference to past political affiliations of its members. Not, it declared, because the Republican party as such, had done anything inconsistent with the Union organization, "for the last is the natural result, the mere continuation of the former. It is in fact the same, with a different name, adopted to save the political pride of those who did not feel disposed, even for the sake of the country, to call themselves Republicans." Contending that the Republicans were greatly in the majority in the Union party, the Oregonian asserted that it could not be denied that they had manifested a generous disposition to share honorable positions with their former opponents. In this the Oregonian avowed acquiescence. "We are opposed, however," it continued, "to the disposition which is sometimes too plainly manifested, to demand as the price of adherence to the cause of patriotism the entire control of the Union party, not for its welfare, but that those who have been managers of the Democratic party may maintain their position as political leaders. It is all very well to say, let there be no distinctions in regard to former politics, but when this is only observed on one side, dis-

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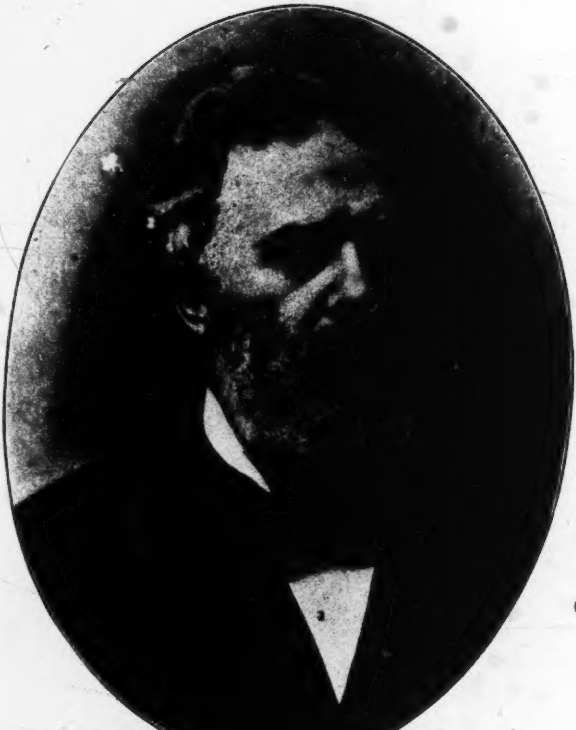
[1] Oregonian, Feb. 13.



MATTHEW P. DEADY

LEARNED JUDGE AND KEEN INTERPRETER OF OREGON POLITICAL EVENTS

trust is awakened. The Union party has been cheated by this kind of management and for that and other good reasons, sincere Union men will insist that there shall be frank and decided devotion to the cause of the country alone." This tacit appeal to "sincere Union men" was evidently efficacious as Mr. Pittock, publisher of the Oregonian, received the nomination the next month for state printer!

There was this inevitable jealousy between the two parties making up the Union organization. There was also the factor of personal interest and ambition, always quick to make capital out of an appeal to patriotism. The Douglas County Union convention condemned the practice "prevalent in this state" of men who held offices, actively engaging in political meetings and influencing men by promise of patronage, as a practice calculated to corrupt conventions and legislatures.[1] Furthermore, there was political jealousy between different sections of the state. Southern Oregon demanded political recognition. The Oregon Sentinel of Jacksonville asserted, March 12, 1863, that when the war broke out, "whisky-soaked, taunting treason was hopefully jubilant in Southern Oregon" and that loyal men felt that but little was wanting to create revolution and partisan warfare in their midst. But the treasonable doctrines that had been taught us as the tenets of the Democratic party had been spurned and refuted, the wavering had been recalled to their allegiance, and now the southern part of the state asked in no uncertain tone for the nomination by the Union party of Orange Jacobs as Congressman, or of some southern man who would look out for the interests of his own district.[2] Subjects to which the Southern Oregonians demanded attention were their mining interests, the opening and protection of an emigrant road into their section and a proper disposal of the Indians which were on their borders. The Jackson county convention in its instructions for Jacobs, declared that the northern part of the state having had four representatives and five Senators in the past four years, the South should have the undisputed right and privilege to furnish the next Representative. At the same time, it passed the resolution: "It is indispensable to the unity, harmony and success of the Union organization that we ignore all local issues and political divisions on local interests, which only inure to the advantage and success of factionists and the common enemy!"[1] A good example, this, of the difficulty, which characterized the period, of harmonizing political theory and practice. As the war advanced the political considerations—party, personal and sectional—tended to encroach more and more upon the purely patriotic.

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[1] Deady correspondence, March 23, to San Francisco Bulletin.

[2] Oregon Sentinel, March 19, 1864.

The Union State Convention heartily endorsed the war measures of the Administration, including especially the Emancipation Proclamation. The prospective amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery was championed. The Amnesty Proclamation was approved as a peace measure both honorable and magnanimous. Locally, a resolution was adopted against taxing mines—"a Morgan for the election to catch miners' votes for somebody."[2] It was the one concession granted to the Southern Oregon voters.

On the first ballot for nomination of a Congressman to succeed J. R. McBride, the leading candidates and the votes given them were: McBride 11, W. C. Johnson 9, Dr. Wilson Bowlley 4, O. Humason 15, J. H. D. Henderson 34, Joel Palmer 10, Orange Jacobs 25.[3] The fifth and deciding vote stood: Henderson 60, Palmer 31, Jacobs 21. Henderson, a Presbyterian minister and a school teacher, might be considered a charter member of the Republican party and represented the radical element in it. This was his first appearance in politics, except for his canvass for a seat in the legislature in 1854 on the Maine Law ticket. Sectional jealousies were largely responsible for the defeat of McBride for renomination. Oregon was at this time asking for a branch United States mint and McBride's disposition toward having it located at The Dalles raised a strong feeling against him in the western and most populous part of the state.

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[1] Oregon Sentinel, March 19, 1864.

[2] Deady to the San Francisco Bulletin.

[3] Proceedings, in Statesman, April 4.

The vote on state printer[1] stood: Pittock of the Oregonian, 57; Craig, of the Statesman, 50. For the first time since it was established in 1851, the Statesman lost the state printing office. H. N. George, Geo. L. Woods and J. F. Gazley were nominated for Presidential electors. As delegates to the National Convention,[2] T. H. Pearne, J. W. Souther, F. Charman, M. Hirsch, Josiah Failing and Hiram Smith were selected and instructed to vote for the renomination of Lincoln.

In commenting upon the results of the convention, the Oregon Sentinel said that considering the strength that Mr. Jacobs carried into the convention, "we are prepared to congratulate Congressional aspirants in Southern Oregon that there is no show for you." However, in its next issue, April 9, it attacks, both on the grounds of principle and policy, the proposition of a few disgruntled ones to bring out an independent Union candidate. The latter were advised that if they wanted to get the Union party of Oregon to send a citizen of the southern counties to Congress or the Senate, they must change their tactics; that the politicians of the Willamette had the power to control all these little matters and that nothing was to be gained by fighting or finding fault with them.

While factional differences were making their appearance in the Union ranks, there was by no means entire harmony in the Democratic party. The Southern secession element was for peace at any price. On the other hand, many of those who were now returning to their old party allegiance, dissatisfied with Lincoln's administration, still professed to be War Democrats and demanded the continued prosecution of the war—but only for the maintenance of the Union. Illustrative of this latter attitude is the following resolution passed by the Polk County Democratic Convention: "We are in favor of prosecuting the war for the purpose of suppressing rebellion, maintaining the Constitution and executing the laws; but we are opposed to any war for the abolition of slavery, or for any other purpose but for the maintenance of the Constitution and Union." In contrast to this was the following statement of O'Meara, one of the leaders of the secession Democrats: "The Democratic party is opposed to the present unnatural, unjust, savage abolition war. Our leaders must say so in obedience to the party command. There is no such thing as a prosecution of this war for the restoration of the Union and the supremacy of the Constitution."

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[1] The election of a printer at this time was necessitated by the death of Harvey Gordon who had been elected in 1862.

[2] It is significant that according to the proceedings, the references in the convention were merely to the National Convention, the prefix Republican being studiously omitted.

The platform adopted by the Democratic State Convention which met at Albany, April 13, demonstrated the truth of the prediction which had been made by the Statesman, that the Copperheads would erect no platform upon which loyal War Democrats could consistently stand. The first plank renewed faith in and devotion to the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of 1798-1799.[1] There was an "irrepressible conflict" between this and the third plank which condemned the actions of the rebellious states. This is explainable by the evident, labored attempt to satisfy two elements in the same platform. However, the same resolution went on to condemn and denounce "that usurpation of tyrannical authority which prohibits the return of those states to the Union, until they shall have made their constitutions conform, not to the will of their respective people, but to suit the anti-slavery views of President Lincoln and his party." An amendment of substitution was offered to this resolution declaring that the Union had not been dissolved and that when any seceded state should be brought back to its allegiance either voluntarily or by force, it should be restored to all its constitutional rights and privileges, free from all Congressional or executive dictation. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 76 to 11, demonstrating the secession strength in the convention. Usurpation, tyranny, fraud and all violations of the Constitution and laws were condemned wholesale in the usual terms. As a special mark of denunciation, the abolition of slavery was singled out and characterized as unjustifiable, revolutionary and dangerous. Another attempt to bait the Douglas Democrats is found in the resolution: "We endorse the sentiment of Senator Douglas that the Government was made on a white basis for white men," etc. The Convention declared it would hail with joy, peace on the basis of the Crittenden Compromise or any honorable basis and condemned all attempts to hinder such settlement as evincing unworthy partisan hate and malice. With a fine show of patriotic zeal the assembled Democrats capped their resolutions with a declaration against all secret political organizations as being subversive of our Republican form of government! Adequate mental reservation is to be presumed to have been made by the Knights of the Golden Circle in attendance.

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[1] Proceedings, Statesman, April 18.

The fact that Ex-Governor Whiteaker was chairman of the convention is suggestive of its political animus. Col. J. K. Kelly, who had made the race for Congress as the candidate of the National Democrats in 1858, was now named as the regular Democratic nominee.[1] He received 71 votes and his competitor, Benj. Hayden, 14. No nomination was made for state printer. A. E. Wait, Benj. Hayden and S. F. Chadwick were nominated for Presidential electors and Benj Stark, L. P. Higbee, W. McMillan, Jefferson Howell, John Whiteaker and N. T. Caton were elected delegates to the National Democratic Convention.

In the campaign which followed, the first plank of the Democratic platform was made the center of attack by the Union party. The Virginia and Kentucky resolutions were shown to be the source of nullification and secession doctrines and Oregon Democracy was charged with at last fighting under its true colors. Lane came out from his seclusion and made a few "Copperhead, secession speeches."[2] Governor Gibbs and Judge Williams, especially the latter, were the leading Union speakers. The Democrats made a desperate effort to carry the state or at least to win enough seats in the legislature to give them a voice in the election of the next United States Senator. To this end they centered their efforts in certain counties.[1] In the June election Henderson was victorious over Kelly by a majority of 2643, the latter carrying but the four counties—Columbia, Jackson, Josephine and Umatilla.[2] The Democrats elected but seven members of the legislature; two in the senate, one each from Josephine and Linn; five in the house, three from Jackson, and one each from Josephine and Umatilla.[3] The member from Umatilla was La Fayette Lane, son of the old General.

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[1] "However he may dislike abolitionism, he does not believe in the anarchical and seditious teachings of the Resolutions of 1798. He is dragged into the canvass by those who desire to have the benefit of his ability and good name. If the party could elect, he would have been the last man selected."—Deady, April 20, 1864, to San Francisco Bulletin.

[2] Statesman, May 30.

It was for the legislature of 1864 to elect a successor to Senator Harding.[4] Both Harding and Nesmith had been giving the Lincoln administration good support in the United States Senate. Oregon's Republican Congressman, McBride, had written to the Argus March 13, 1863, lauding the two Democratic Senators for devoting their energies to the support of Lincoln in overthrowing the rebellion. The Oregonian, March 18, 1864, cheerfully credited Harding with having "generally reflected the wishes of the majority of his constituents in his congressional action." Nevertheless, neither Harding nor Nesmith were in accord with the Republican policies that were rapidly being developed by the issues of the war. They, and particularly Harding, had taken positions that were not at all satisfactory to those to whom they owed their election.[5] They were far from representative of the Union party in Oregon in 1864. Hence, naturally, Harding was not considered seriously for re-election. The two recognized candidates were Judge Williams and T. H. Pearne.

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[1] In Polk County, voters were colonized in large numbers from outside districts to vote for the Democratic ticket (see Statesman, June 6).

[2] Official returns in Statesman, July 18.

[3] Statesman, Sept. 5.

[4] When Nesmith and Baker were elected Senators in 1860, the latter was elected for the short term, ending in 1864. On his death, Stark filled the vacancy by appointment until the Legislature of 1862 elected Harding to serve the remaining two years.

[5] Oregonian, Dec. 19, 1863.

In the organization of the legislature John H. Mitchell was elected president of the senate and now started on his long political career which was to be inextricably woven with the political history of the state. The senatorial campaign of 1864 was singularly free from any suggestion of "unclean practice."[1] Deady wrote to the Bulletin, September 13: "The matter is decently and quietly managed on all hands. No open rooms, no free drinks or eleemosynary eatables. Plain, earnest men are gathered about in little groups discussing the election, with reference to the good of the country and some particular project or person." The first ballot, taken September 15, stood: Williams 27, Pearne 20, W. H. Watkins 2, J. F. Miller 6. The vote for the latter represented the Democratic strength minus one vote, that of Curl, who voted for Williams. The third ballot resulted in election, Williams getting 31 votes, Pearne 16, Watkins 2 and Miller 6.

At last Judge Williams realized the ambition from the achievement of which his pronounced free state doctrine had heretofore been largely instrumental in preventing him. He was at this time considered a Republican practically, though he had never avowedly become so. It was at least well understood that he would never go back to the Democratic party.[2] Considering the great place which Oregon's "Grand Old Man" has had for over a half century in the history of the state, the characterization which was made of him at this time by Judge Deady, is full of interest:[3] "He is clever in both the English and American sense of that much used and much abused word; is generous and unsuspicious and does not long cherish ill will towards any one. Personally, he is popular with the people and his election is very generally satisfactory or cheerfully acquiesced in. . . . Though earnest, he is not destructive and will help build up rather than tear down. He is a good popular speaker, clear and distinct in his ideas, always forcible, often eloquent and sometimes rises into the region of imagination and adorns his speech with pure poetic gems.[1] . . . Judge Williams is a man of today and draws his inspiration from the associations and wants of the present."

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[1] "The cleanest in the history of the state," said Judge Williams to the writer. "I didn't spend a dollar and used no influence whatever with members, and I don't believe Pearne did."

[2] Personal statement of Judge Williams.

[3] Correspondence, Sept. 19, to San Francisco Bulletin.

At this session of the legislature the notorious Viva Voce ballot law, by which the Democrats had made "daylight shine through the Know Nothing Wigwams" in 1855, again put in its periodical appearance. A bill of repeal was introduced in the house and was supported by the five Democratic members and opposed by all the Union members, in the realization that circumstances alter cases or, as an onlooker put it, that "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."[2]

Meanwhile, the Presidential campaign was in progress, and was rapidly becoming very active in Oregon. "Old Abe" and "Little Mac" were the watchwords of the contending parties. Clubs were formed in every direction. The Loyal Leagues were being disbanded by the Union men and Lincoln and Johnson clubs substituted for them. Many prominent Democrats who had been identified with the Union organization were now supporting McClellan, among them, Bush, Nesmith, Harding, Thayer, Hayden, Grover, Elkins and Humason. The attitude of Senator Nesmith was well expressed in what was known in Oregon as the "Milwaukie letter," dated at Milwaukie, Wisconsin, September 2, 1864, and written to Harding, who had returned from Washington to Oregon. Nesmith had just attended the National Democratic Convention at Chicago. His letter is important as showing the position of a certain class of loyal war Democrats who had been faithfully supporting the Lincoln Administration in prosecuting the war. He confessed that he took no particular interest in the canvass, yet, regarding McClellan as an honest man and a patriot, he should prefer to see him elected for the reason that it would remove the obstacles to terms of peace. In case the war continued, he thought that McClellan would be surrounded by more competent and honest advisers than those by which Lincoln had been, and that the war would be prosecuted with more ability and vigor. He voiced his objection to the mixing of the slavery question with that which was the prime object of the war—the preservation of the Union. However, as far as the Chicago platform itself was concerned, he said it consisted of vague and glittering generalities, and that he had no unity with the "peace bait" if it meant recognition of the Southern Confederacy. Indeed he pledged his best efforts to Lincoln toward bringing about a successful termination of the war.

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[1] As an example of his apt, poetic expression—he addressed informally a company of friends who called to congratulate him in the evening of the day of his election. In thanking them for efforts in his behalf, he said: "I will write these obligations upon the tablets of my memory and recite them daily as the rosary of my friendship."

[2] Deady correspondence, Oct. 22, to Bulletin.

On the other hand, Judge Deady, who at the opening of the war was a radical, pro-slavery Democrat of the Breckinridge school, supported Lincoln in 1864. The following keen characterization of the situation is found in a private letter written by him to Nesmith, November 12:

> "I took no part in the election of consequence, but voted for Lincoln. This change of Presidents every four years to make a new deal of the offices, is the curse of the country and is as much the cause of our present troubles as all other things combined. Besides I have no very exalted opinion of Mac at best. He is neither one thing or the other. Mr. Lincoln I think a pure man, means well and is gifted with as much good common sense and sagacity as often falls to the lot of men, particularly Presidents. . . . The people are the authors of most of Mr. Lincoln's mistakes (if they be mistakes) and as usual now seek to hold him alone responsible for them."

It is evident from the contents of the newspapers prior to the November election that there was felt a vague alarm over the country at large of a Copperhead conspiracy of some nature that might result in revolution in the North in case of Republican success at the polls. That this alarm was strongly felt in Oregon, is clearly shown in the following notice which appeared in the Daily Statesman, November 10:

> "The Mayor of this city has called a meeting tonight for the purpose of conferring in relation to the apprehension which is generally diffused, of an armed outbreak. It has been thought best by men of all political organizations

> that such a meeting should be held and it is hoped that everybody who attends will do so in a fair, candid and calm spirit, so that the uneasiness now prevalent may be effectually removed."

The meeting was held, pacifying speeches were made, and a committee composed of both Copperheads and Union men—J. S. Smith, N. T. Caton, R. P. Boise, C. G. Curl and J. C. Peebles—was appointed to draft pacificatory and reassuring resolutions which were reported to another meeting held on the following evening. "There was a meeting to suppress insurrection at Salem last night," wrote our faithful chronicler Deady to Nesmith. "Don't know how much cause there is for it, but suspect there is some truth in the statement that arms have been shipped here from California and distributed through the interior of the state."

Oregon gave Lincoln a majority over McClellan of 1431 votes.[1] McClellan carried nine counties—Baker, Benton, Jackson, Josephine, Lane, Linn, Tillamook, Umatilla and Wasco—but with small majorities ranging from 10 in Benton to 119 in Umatilla. Lincoln's majority in November was only about one-half what Henderson's had been in June. The Union vote in the state had not fallen off—it had increased by over 1100 votes; but the Democratic vote had increased by nearly 2500. In the hitherto sparsely settled districts of Northeastern Oregon, the Democrats gained nearly 1000 votes in the five months. The vanguard of "Price's Army" had arrived. The cloud the size of a man's hand could be seen on the political horizon of the Union party.

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[1] Official returns, in Statesman, Dec. 5.

CHAPTER XIV

POLITICAL REALIGNMENT

The feeling of political uncertainty which pervaded the Nation after the death of President Lincoln and the inauguration of Andrew Johnson, was strikingly reflected in Oregon. Political chaos reigned for months. The political associations which had resulted from the war were on the verge of dissolution over the issues which the war had raised. Readjustments were being sought, very cautiously and warily. But in all this political shifting, the new President was an important factor. The fact that he was an unknown quantity added to the confusion of the situation which political conditions in Oregon would have rendered sufficiently confusing at best. Every faction and every newspaper was busily trying to find itself politically, in relation to the President. Each faction was accusing all the others of crafty designs and selfish purposes. The unmodified Democrats hated Johnson and hated the Bush-Douglas-McClellan factionists who were evidently preparing to become Johnson Democrats. One wing of the Union party, whose exponent was the Statesman, was loyally supporting Johnson, but looked askance at the Bush faction. The members of the latter were accused of planning a flank movement for the purpose of capturing the Johnson idea for their wing of the Democratic party and thus knocking out the foundations from under the Union party's platform. The other wing of the Union party, led by the Oregonian, was already reflecting the radical Republican movement of the East by covertly attacking Johnson. The Oregonian and the Statesman were again manifesting that cordial hatred toward each other which had characterized the days of the old Democratic Regime, when the columns of each were made lurid by the flaming pens of Dryer and Bush. Each was soon applying the epithet of "Copperhead" to the other.

Harding was now regarded as an apostate by the Unionists. On his return from Washington in March, 1865, the Statesman, in what might be termed a prose version of Whittier's "Ichabod," grieved over him as lost to the Union cause which had honored and trusted him.[1] Bush and Harding were looked upon at the close of the war as the leaders of the Douglas-McClellan men in an effort to reorganize the Oregon Democracy on the basis of President Johnson's policy. The Statesman spoke of this as "a flank movement intended to capture our Union platform" and said, "Democrats are welcome to a place under the Union banners, with Andy Johnson as our leader, but we would much rather they would come in open day."[2] The Statesman labored to show professedly loyal Democrats how impossible and unnatural was a union between them, under the leadership of Bush and Harding, with the secession, unreconstructed Democracy of the state, under the leadership of O'Meara and Malone. The latter was characterized as "the real Democracy of these latter years" which "will hang on to the old resolutions of 1798-1799 and vote with the Southern disorganizers, nullifiers, Mexican and English exiles and the Booths and Surratts generally. They don't like the Government, never did and don't intend to." "What then, is your duty as citizens?" asked the Statesman in an editorial, "A Few Words to Democratic Subscribers."[3] "Plainly this: cast in your votes and influence with the party that has the ability and strength to conduct the affairs of the Nation successfully."

But if on the one hand the Statesman was desirous of heading off Democratic reorganization along the lines suggested, no less anxious was the Copperhead Democracy itself. It desired Democratic reunion but not reorganization under the auspices of Bush and Harding, whom it characterized as "disorganizing reorganizers." Its attitude was forcefully expressed by Malone in the Oregon Reporter, published at Jacksonville.[4]

> "Let not the men who stood the brunt of battle for the last four years, allow the Salem nest of Puritan sneaks—who led their followers into the abolition ranks and cannot now get them back—take the lead of them. These infamous

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[1] Statesman, March 20, 1865.
[2] Ibid., October 2.
[3] Statesman, July 31.
[4] Quoted in the Statesman, Sept. 25.

> renegades have no party—no strength. Having led their followers into the camp of the enemy, Bush and Harding are officers without privates. They have no party, but desire to get back and take the lead of ours. . . . To thwart these men next June, let the legislative tickets be watched in the various counties. These fellows who elected Baker in 1860 must be punished. . . . Until these Judases are dead and buried and their memories made infamous, there can be no clean foundation on which to build a Democratic party in Oregon."

To add to the complexity of the situation, a controversy was raging in the ranks of the Copperhead Democracy itself, between two of its leading papers, the Albany States Rights Democrat, edited by O'Meara and the Eugene Review, edited by Noltner. O'Meara insisted on "committing the party to an unequivocal endorsement of the most extreme doctrines ever taught by the politicians of the Calhoun school." He fought Johnson and opposed the idea of the party's adopting a policy of expediency—insisted on remaining unreconstructed, in brief. The Review on the other hand wished to follow the expedient policy adopted by the Northern Democracy. It inclined toward Johnson and wished to profit by the strife between him and the Radicals. Thus, in 1865 we find on one hand, the Union party with its two Statesman-Oregonian, later Johnson-anti-Johnson, wings. On the other, the organized or Copperhead Democracy with its discords. And between the two organized parties fluttered the following of Bush and Harding, who, in the language of the old fable, had hardly determined whether they were to be beasts or birds. The manner in which, within the next three or four years, these various factions were fused and aligned in two political parties and the influences which brought about that result, it will be the purpose of the remaining pages to show.

The Oregonian had spoken on the subject of reconstruction as early as the summer of 1864 and voiced clearly the congressional attitude. It held that before the seceded states should be readmitted to the Union they must first "be divested of all sovereign capacity and pass through a probationary territorial existence."[1] But after Lincoln announced his policy, the Oregonian reversed its attitude and supported it, holding that the states had never been out of the Union and attacking Sumner's territorial idea both as unhistorical and impolitic.[2] The first serious treatment of the subject by the Statesman appeared May 29, 1865, in a leader—"Is It Reconstruction?" It asserted that the very term "reconstruction" implied a previous dissolution. This had not been admitted by Lincoln, was not admitted by Johnson or by any sound, safe leader in the Union party and could not be it asserted, without admitting at once the whole secession theory. It championed Lincoln's doctrine, that the Government was dealing with individuals, not with states. On one hand it deprecated the attitude of the radicals, like Chandler, Sumner and Wade who looked upon the subjugated states as reduced to Territories, and on the other it objected to the contention of the Democrats in congress that the southern states had not been disorganized and that they were entitled to resume their federal relations with their existing secession organizations and officers. The Statesman used the term "reorganization" in place of "reconstruction" and said in conclusion: "The work of reorganization will probably be brief and will have but one obstacle—the status of the Negro. The work of pacification will require much time and careful management."

The Oregonian had a few good words for Johnson during the first weeks of his term, but ere long began to oppose him, very mildly at first, in his reconstruction policy. What might be termed mild, question-mark editorials appeared in the Oregonian in the early fall of 1865. November 11, it asserted that, while it would not have been safe to follow the radicals implicitly, it was by no means wise to utterly discard their suggestions. It admitted that as the President had chosen to consider the rebellious states as never having withdrawn from the Union, it became necessary to follow out a line of policy which should be consistent with itself and which should not interfere with the rights of the states as separate political communities. Nevertheless, the Oregonian declined to acquiesce in such a policy which in general terms it admitted to be logical and necessary. It furthermore opposed Johnson for extreme clemency toward "the rebels" when he had said on his accession that treason was a crime and must be punished with severity.

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[1] Oregonian, July 23, 1864.
[2] Ibid., March 4, 1865.

The Oregon Sentinel, which represented the Union party in the southern part of the state, declared the best test of a man's Unionism to be that he was a firm, consistent supporter of the Johnson Administration, exactly as the support of the Lincoln Administration had been the test during the war.[1] Even after the veto of the Freedmen's Bureau bill in February, 1866, which marked the decisive break between Johnson and Congress, the Sentinel was conservative and declared its allegiance to the President. It made the statement that of the eight Union papers in Oregon, six favored the veto, agreeing that it was necessary and that the President had not and would not abandon the Union party and go to the Democracy; that only one paper had abused President Johnson for his veto.[2]

On February 24, the Oregonian frankly admitted the schism between the President and Congress. It accused Johnson of ignoring the latter; of having pursued a plan which was obnoxious to a very large proportion of the loyal people of the country; of recognizing with political power, the rebels. "The Union party does not want to break with President Johnson. It is loth to declare its dissent from his policy. . . . But it will no longer potter with rebels nor will it consent to have the advantages of the great and costly victory it has gained, frittered away. . . . We will not abandon the President; let us wait and see if he will totally abandon us."

In a two column editorial, "A Decisive Hour," the Statesman, February 26, treated, rather dramatically, the opening political feud at Washington. After defending the grounds on which the veto was based as being in harmony with all the precedents, teaching and policy of Lincoln's Administration and avowing that it would therefore sustain him to the utmost, the Statesman made the following somewhat fervid utterance:

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[1] Sentinel, Oct. 21, 1865.

[2] Ibid., March 17, 1866. The opposite view is given by Deady in a letter to Nesmith, March 2: "The Statesman sustains the President, but I know of no other Union paper or leading influence that does in this state. I know nothing about the merits of the Freedmen's Bill, but the reasons he gives for its veto I think radically wrong as is his whole theory about the states of the late Southern Confederacy. I suppose you agree with the President and I fancy are a candidate for the Senate."

> "The radicals in Congress have abandoned both the Union party and the President. . . . The Copperheads are ready to catch at anything to divide us. They are now hurrahing for Johnson but cannot tell why. . . . We will be fools and recreant traitors if we permit the Copperheads to champion the President. We are his proper and rightful defenders. . . . As a Union party we must endorse Johnson unanimously. We must do it now. . . . Your President has not deserted you. He has not gone to the Copperheads. . . . Never fear. Seward stands by Johnson; the people stand by Johnson," etc.

The Oregonian replied in like vein in a long editorial in which it practically read the Statesman out of the Union party.[1]

> "The President seems disposed to sever his connection with the great Union party, and the Oregon Statesman goes with him. So do the Review and the States Rights Democrat. . . .[2] The Statesman has found its long sought opportunity. . . . The combination against the Union party which it foreshadowed, has been effected. . . . The 'Johnson party' is born! . . . The Statesman is 'for Andrew Johnson against all his enemies.' We are for the whole loyal party and will not sever our connection with it to go with a single person, even though that person be the one who has all the federal offices at his disposal. The Democratic party in the coming canvass will go for Pres. Johnson. He will be their champion. And as the Statesman sustains him against the Union party, it may find its proper associations with the Review and the Democrat. But there will be no division in the Union party. The little circle of 'mutual admiration' men who make the Statesman their organ may slough off if they will. The party will be far better off without them."

These two quotations, the one from the Statesman and the other from the Oregonian, show clearly the opposite positions which the two leading Union papers of Oregon held and the resulting attitude which they manifested toward each other.

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[1] Oregonian, March 3, 1866.
[2] Statesman, April 17, 1865.

From this time on, the Oregonian attacked Johnson as unreservedly as any well recognized political opponent, and as viciously.

The views of the two journals as to the proper status of the Negroes, freed by the war, were almost as antithetical as on the general question of reconstruction. Governor Gibbs called a special session of the legislature to meet December 5, 1865, to consider the Thirteenth Amendment which had been presented by Congress to the various states. The Amendment passed the senate by a vote of 13 to 3 and the house by a vote of 30 to 4. The seven Democrats of the assembly vigorously opposed it. The Statesman was almost alone in opposing the call of the special session, arguing that the settling of the question at that time would rob the Union party of a good issue in the approaching campaign, and that it would entail useless expense. Emancipation suggested, almost immediately, other vital issues anent the future of the Negro, which began at once to receive attention. The chief of these issues was naturally that of negro suffrage.

The first explicit statement on the question made by the Statesman appeared October 2, 1865. It came out squarely against the issue and was inclined to ridicule those Union men, and especially the office-seekers for their delicacy in discussing the subject or avoidance of it altogether. In a sentence, its objection to the enfranchisement of the Negro was this: "We do not believe that any democratic or republican form of government can successfully govern two separate and distinct races of people in large numbers with equal political rights to both races." The Oregonian did not yet give an explicit expression on the issue, satisfying itself with giving space to a few innuendoes at the position of the Statesman, which called forth the rejoinder—"The Statesman has expressed its opinion plainly upon this, the most important question of the day, while the Oregonian, with its usual want of manly frankness, is waiting to see which way it will be prudent to jump."[1]

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[1] Statesman, Oct. 30, 1865.

At the special session of the legislature above referred to three resolutions upon the subject were passed. The first announced agreement with Pres. Johnson in his position that suffrage is a question that constitutionally belongs to the states, and not to Congress and that suffrage is a political and not a natural right. The second applauded the Negroes for loyal support of the Union and declared it the duty of Congress to guide and assist them in attaining to the highest standard of which they were capable. The third declared that if the Negroes did not fare well in the South under the new conditions, Congress should take steps toward colonizing them in a new state of their own. The Oregonian, November 18, deprecated "setting the whole state in an uproar by discussing with vehement warmth" a question that "is not now and probably never can become a matter of paramount importance here." It asserted it to be a matter for each state to settle for itself and still did not commit itself on the general issue.

Beginning in the year 1866, the Democratic papers of the state pushed the subject to the front in the effort to force a political issue in the approaching campaign on the subject of negro suffrage or as they presented it, negro equality. The Oregonian, whose great anxiety was to avoid such an issue, was finally, May 5, goaded into the expressive, effective retort:

> "One cannot pick up any Democratic newspaper without finding these terrible words (Negro equality) staring at him from all parts of the page. . . . The world has furnished many remarkable instances of 'the ruling passion strong in death,' but the Democratic party has been permitted to become about the most remarkable example on record. Born of the slavery interest, nurtured by the profits of human bondage, hoisted to and kept in power by the slave trade and propagandist and now dying of an overdose of 'nigger' and self-administered treason, the Democratic party will have no consolation not derived from recollections of the 'nigger' and strongly objects to being buried in anything but a 'nigger' shroud, a 'nigger' coffin and a 'nigger' grave. It will expire with 'negro equality' last on its mortal tongue."

Interest in and preparations for the election of 1866 began to be manifested very early. In November of the preceding year, in an editorial, "The Slate Made Up," the Oregonian made a bitter attack on the Statesman and "the little knot of chronic office-seekers who hover about the state capital," for trying to dictate the ticket to be nominated by the Union party. It accused the Statesman, Nesmith, Harding and a few others, of making it up from among their own ilk, asserting that there was but one of the old Republican party among the "Clique's elect." In another attack, December 2, under the caption, "The Salem Program," the Oregonian charged the Statesman and its following with arranging to organize a third party—a conservative Union party, shutting out the radical Copperhead Democrats on one side and the radical Republicans on the other. From this time each paper labored to show that it represented the real Union party in Oregon.

In 1865 the Democrats began to claim the next election on the strength of the emigrant vote, a good indication of the extent and political nature of which had been given in the presidential election of the preceding year. Immediately at the close of the war it seemed to be generally understood that there would be a general emigration of Southern refugees to the Northwest, and the papers took up the discussion as to the legal and political status of such as voters. The legislature of 1864 passed an act prohibiting any one voting in Oregon who had been directly engaged in the rebellion, saving his rights under Lincoln's amnesty proclamation. This law was modified at the special session of 1865 in a way which the Statesman declared made it "just such a harmless affair as any guerilla from Price's army would desire."[1] It asserted that there were five or six hundred rebels in Oregon who had never taken either the amnesty oath of Pres. Lincoln or Pres. Johnson and objected strongly to allowing such a vote. It demanded that the Confederate rebellion be treated as something more odious than a Democratic holiday. In the language of Andrew Johnson—"treason should be made odious."

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[1] Statesman, Jan. 1, 1866.

The Union State Convention of 1866 met at Corvallis, March 29. A young man from Multnomah County served as secretary of this convention. Since May of the preceding year he had been editor of the Oregonian and had already given evidence of that ability which was to give that journal the political prestige in Oregon which had been held by Bush and the Statesman and which has later given the editorial page of the Oregonian a national reputation. The young man was Harvey W. Scott.

The platform adopted was a clever piece of political strategy, in which its framers succeeded admirably in their evident determination to be as vague as possible on the struggle between Congress and the President and on the issues confronting the country.[1] It declared that as to the best plan of restoring the late revolted states to the exercise of all their functions in the Union and as to the legislation necessary to freedmen, loyal men "may honestly differ." A remarkable echo, this, suggestive of the days of the old Democratic regime when good Democrats were accorded the privilege of honestly differing on the slavery question. That "obstinacy and pride of opinion" was rebuked, where or by whom displayed, that would give strength to the enemies of the Union through discord and division among the friends. The third resolution expressed a desire for a full recognition of all civil and political privileges to the people of the revolted states, as soon as compatible with national safety and the protection of the loyal people in those states.[2] Imprecations were heaped on the men or party who would countenance repudiating the national debt. A further evidence of the attempt to suit both the strict and loose constructionists in the Union party was found in the declaration—"We will as we ever have, support the State Governments in all their rights, as the most competent administrators of their domestic concerns and the surest breastwork against anti-republican tendencies; and preserve the General Government in its whole constitutional vigor." Another vivid reminder here of Democratic platform building in ante-bellum days. The Satesman manifested ill-concealed signs of disgust over the platform while the Democratic view was pungently expressed by the Oregon Daily Herald, April 5, which caustically arraigned the resolutions for their glittering generalities, double-dealing, misrepresentation and evasion. At the end of [illegible] long string of questions which it claimed had been totally ignored by "the Corvallis wire-pullers," the Herald asked—"Shall President Johnson be supported in his praiseworthy attempts to restore the Constitution to its pristine vigor? Or shall the Radicals—the Jacobins of America—assume power and override the Constitution?"

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[1] Proceedings, in Statesman, April 2.

[2] Deady, April 6, to Bulletin: "This is evidently the work of those who sympathize with Congress and at the same time are not disposed to dogmatize, so as to leave no room for those who lean toward the President to act and vote with the party. It assumes rather than asserts that the relation of the 'late revolted states' with the Union is a matter within the authority and power of Congress. In the end, much depends upon the instincts and personal proclivities of the candidate who stands upon it."

In selecting the ticket, the policy which Oregon had adopted of electing a new man for Congressman for each succeeding term was followed and Rufus Mallory of Marion was named to succeed Henderson. He had been a Douglas Democrat and was one of the directors of the Oregon Printing and Publishing Company, which published the Statesman. He was characterized by Judge Deady[1] as a man of very fair natural abilities—a practical politician with his ear to the ground to catch the drift. Eastern Oregon was recognized in the nomination of Geo. L. Woods, of The Dalles, for governor, a man of eloquence and prepossessing appearance. S. E. May and E. N. Cooke were renominated for state secretary and treasurer, respectively, and W. A. McPherson of the Albany Journal was named for printer.

The platform adopted by the Democrats in state convention at Portland, April 5, was a lengthy one, treating the various issues in some detail.[2] However, it was by no means free from those "glittering generalities" with which the Herald had charged the Union resolutions—such as an expression for the support of the state governments in all their rights and the Federal Government in all its vigor. The congressional policy relative to the South was heartily condemned and President Johnson was as heartily and unequivocally endorsed. The shade of Senator Douglas was again tacitly invoked for aid in leading Douglas Democrats back into the fold, in a resolution endorsing his expression that this Government was made on a white basis for white men, hence "we are opposed to extending the right of suffrage to any other." The platform denounced as a base insult to the gallant living and heroic dead, the efforts of the Radicals to convert the Nation's victory into a partisan triumph, seeking to make the late war one of conquest, instead of suppression of the rebellion—for subjugation instead of restoring the Union, for the Negro instead of the white man. Centralization of power, the protective tariff and the system of national banks were opposed and the taxation of United States bonds demanded.

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[1] Deady, April 6, to Bulletin.

[2] Statesman, April 23.

James D. Fay[1] of Jackson was nominated for Congress; Jas. K. Kelly of Wasco for governor; L. F. Lane of Multnomah, for secretary; John C. Bell of Marion for treasurer; James O'Meara, of the States Rights Democrat, Linn, for printer. Editor O'Meara now found himself running for a lucrative office on a platform which strongly endorsed President Johnson whom he strongly opposed.[2] He accordingly came forth cheerfully with the manifesto—"We shall stand by the President. To be with the President is to beat back fanaticism."[3]

An interesting and significant characterization of the personnel in general of the two state tickets is found in a private letter from Senator Nesmith, dated at Washington, May 20, 1866, to Judge Deady. "It seems to me," he writes, "that the Democratic ticket—with the exception of Kelly—is such a one as Jeff Davis himself would select, while the other is such as no one ought to select. The first is controlled by men who desired to see the Government disrupted and the latter is controlled by those who desire to keep it so. I sympathize with neither. I was in hopes that the conservative men of the state would combine upon the President's policy and give some practical aid in restoring the country to its former prosperous condition—barring however the institution of slavery to which you were once so devoted. I perhaps expected too much of trading politicians who have more regard for party than for country."

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[1] "Of Irish descent, a little fellow with a gamey manner—florid, fluent, ready and impudent. A thorough going anti-coercion Democrat."—Deady, April 6, to Bulletin.

[2] Supra, p. 239.

[3] Quoted in Oregonian, April 28.

The bitterness and desperate nature of the campaign which followed is better reflected in the Oregonian than in the Statesman, the former throwing its whole strength into the fight. It made a specialty of showing up the records of all the Democrats connected with the campaign and quoting past treasonable utterances by them, thus rendering the campaign bitterly personal. As a last appeal to voters it begged them to "give the old traitor, Jo Lane, another kick," asserting that if the Democrats gained the legislature, Lane was to be sent back to the Senate. The Democrats laid stress upon what they termed the fanatical and disruptive measures of the Radicals in Congress, charging that the Union party was composed of disunionists. They were insistent in their demand for the taxation of United States bonds, were strong against the tariff, and were hysterical over threatened "Negro equality."[1] On the whole, the Union party nominees and campaigners took the side of Congress as against Johnson. The Statesman, now the only Johnson paper in the Union party, became very much subdued in its attitude—even to the extent of endorsing the reconstruction report of the Congressional committee.[2] The Unionists denied the imputations of the Democrats on the subject of negro suffrage, some maintaining that this was not an issue in the canvass, others expressing their opposition to the principle.

The result of the election was very close, especially as compared with the results of elections since the forming of the Union organization. The whole Union ticket was elected, the majorities ranging from 277[1], given to Woods for governor, to 600 for May. The majority given to Mallory for Congressman was 553. The composition of the new legislature was: senate—Union 15, Democratic 7; house—Union 26, Democratic 21.[2] Here was plainly demonstrated the returning Democratic strength—the drift toward political realignment. The legislature of 1862 had contained three Democrats; that of 1864, seven; that of 1866, twenty-eight. The Union party had gained nearly 500 votes since the presidential election of 1864, but the Democrats had gained over 1300.

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[1] "Shall U. S. bonds be taxed? Shall the toiling millions of this land pay the taxes of the rich? Shall negroes be placed upon the same social and political footing with white men," etc.—Oregon Daily Herald, April 5.

[2] Deady to Nesmith, June 11.

The Statesman said the result was quite as good as it had reason to expect; that the immigrant vote was much larger than any one expected, but that the Union ticket had either divided that vote or largely recruited from the McClellan vote of the last election, else it had been defeated.[3] The Oregonian asserted bluntly that much of the increased vote was due to the immigrations from Price's disbanded forces, "all of whom gave aid and comfort to the Democratic ticket in Oregon as they did to the rebellion in Missouri."[4] In noting that some of its exchanges viewed the election as a Radical triumph while others claimed that it was an endorsement of Pres. Johnson's course, the Oregonian asserted that men of candor would not claim that a victory, achieved by a party which sustained the congressional policy throughout in direct opposition to that of Johnson, was a very brilliant victory for the President. "The victory was fairly gained," it declared, after the severest contest ever known in the state."[5]

The Union party was turning strongly toward the Congressional side of the great political controversy in the early months of 1866. The temporary espousal of Johnson by the Democrats of the state greatly accelerated this tendency and practically forced the wavering ones in the Union ranks to associate themselves with the Radical element of the party. A Conservative Union party in Oregon, under the leadership of the President, as desired by Senator Nesmith, was made impossible. Whatever danger there was of a division of the Unionists was averted, and the way was paved for the future rehabilitation of the Republican party. The situation was forcefully expressed in a private letter from Judge Deady to Senator Nesmith, dated August 9, 1866: "You ask me to recommend a man for the place (U. S. Marshal) who is a Johnson man—who is neither a Radical nor an opposer of the war. This is a narrow field in this state. Most decent people here are either with Congress or opposed to it. The latter class are generally Democrats and were opposed to the prosecution of the war."

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[1] This was the majority as found by the Legislature which canvassed the returns. See Oregonian, Sept. 15.

[2] Statesman, July 30.

[3] Ibid., June 18.

[4] Oregonian, June 9.

[5] Oregonian, June 30.

As early as March 6, 1866, a club had been formed at Washington, D. C., by leading senators and others who supported Johnson.[1] In June the executive committee of the club called a "National Union Convention" to meet at Philadelphia, August 14, for the purpose of effecting a national organization of the conservative Union forces. Senator Nesmith was prominently connected with the movement, and was a member of the executive committee. Other Oregon representatives at Philadelphia as given by the Oregonian, September 22, were: W. H. Farrar, or "Slippery Bill Farrar," McClellan Democrat, a member of the committee on organization; Ex-Governor Geo. L. Curry, Copperhead editor of Portland Advertiser, which had been suppressed, vice-president for Oregon; E. M. Barnum, secession Democrat, member of committee on resolutions. Senator Nesmith was the only man representing Oregon at this National Union Convention, who was a consistent Union man, and the Oregon representation was probably fairly suggestive of the political complexion of the convention at large.

The calling of the Philadelphia convention and the enthusiastic notice given it by the Democrats all over the country was an added and decisive influence in uniting the Union elements in Oregon on the side of the Radicals. The Oregon Sentinel, which only six months before was championing Johnson, now denounced the Philadelphia Convention and those connected with it. "We will yield Mr. Johnson to the Democracy cheerfully and feel satisfied that he rightfully belongs there. . . . Johnson & Co. were forced to ally themselves to the Democracy in order to gratify their egotistical ambition and we have the mortification of seeing those whom we chose as leaders, made the silly or perhaps willing tools of men who can outwit them in political chicancery." The Statesman, which had so zealously espoused Johnson, likewise began to weaken as the strife between the President and Congress developed, and after the call had been issued for the meeting of the National Union Convention. D. W. Craig, formerly of the Argus, had secured the controlling interest of the Statesman[1] and in August, 1866, sold the paper to Benjamin Simpson, a Union Democrat, who had been one of the directors of the Oregon Printing and Publishing Company. Craig's editor, J. Gaston, said in his parting salutation—"Let us stand, not for men, but for principles. If we divide into 'Johnson men' or 'Radicals,' into 'Douglas Democrats' or 'Republicans,' we but abandon the field of politics to the control of unmitigated Copperheads."[2] This was a decidedly different tone from that which had characterized the Statesman heretofore.

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[1] W. A. Dunning, "Reconstruction, Political and Economic," p. 73.

But the accession of the new management marked another change in the checkered career of the paper. "A change has come over the spirit of the Statesman," announced the new editors, the sons of the new proprietor, Sylvester C. and Samuel L. Simpson, in their salutatory. "Already you have heard the farewell shot of the retiring editor and now, ere its echoes have died away, we come to renew the battle. . . . Opposed to the Utopian ideas of fanatical reformers, yet having no sympathy with treason, we shall calmly yet earnestly discuss every measure for the restoration of the states and the general weal of our common country." The Statesman accordingly renewed its allegiance to Johnson, espousing the Philadelphia Convention. It declared for the re-election of Nesmith as senator against the attacks directed against him by the Oregonian and savagely attacked negro suffrage. The "middle of the road" position, which the Statesman now assumed was a difficult and untenable one. As Deady had keenly observed, this was a narrow field in Oregon, or better, it was a wide field but very thinly populated. The political exigencies were sharply dividing the people into the Radical Unionists on the one hand and the Democrats on the other. Few indeed were they who maintained a middle position, and the Statesman was thus now the spokesman of a very small constituency. As the weeks passed, it seemed to realize the hopelessness of its position. On November 5, 1866, in answer to critics, who prophesied for it a speedy dissolution, the Statesman gave expression to a despairing protest which is here quoted in part as portraying very accurately the feelings of those who struggled against the political currents which would take them to one extreme or the other:

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[1] Geo. H. Himes, "History of the Press of Oregon," in Oregon Historical Quarterly for December, 1902, p. 360.

[2] Statesman, Aug. 13.

> "There *must* be a golden mean somewhere between sympathy with rebellion and the worship of thick-lipped deities. . . . Surely there is a love of country which shall not combine with too great a veneration of the Negro. . . . With Stephen A. Douglas we entertain a few somewhat heretical notions about this being a white man's government and do not propose to yield them. . . . But there is one platform that is wide enough for us all—support of the Union, and for the flag, love and loyalty. The Statesman was with the Government in the 'valley of the Shadow' and shall not wander from its faith when the night is scattering and brighter fields are opening beyond. . . . A liberal policy toward the conquered states was the one, in our judgment, most worthy of the Nation and best calculated to harmonize the clashing antagonisms of a broken Union and soothe the virulence of a discomfited people; and for that, no excess of radical majorities shall drive us to the confessional."

By this time, after the fall campaigns in the East in which the President had demonstrated his personal foibles, the Statesman felt compelled to abandon him. But yet while "blushing for his imprudence in trailing the robes of office in the filth of brutal crowds," it declared itself to despise above all things "that party whose bosom is a shield to such infamous outlawry and whose banner is the protection of swaggering vagabondism." Thus did the Statesman hurl final defiance at the Republican element which now wholly dominated the Union party. In the following month, December, 1866, the paper was sold to the owners of the Unionist with which it was merged, the name of the Statesman being dropped. The Oregonian, in announcing the demise of its old rival, granted that it had one time absolutely controlled the politics of the state but observed that its final plunge into the depths of Johnson "conservatism" had been too much for it.[1] Within a few years the old name was re-adopted but the days of the Statesman as an important factor in the political history of Oregon, were over.

The Oregonian was the true exponent of the Union party as now constituted. The spirit of the party is exemplified in an editorial, December 15, 1866, on "Radical Reconstruction," which hailed with satisfaction the fact that Congress "is pushing forward fearlessly." "The work of reconstruction is now to begin from the foundation and will go back to where it stood on the surrender of the rebel armies. . . . The action of the South has made it necessary. Traitors will take back seats. Loyal men will govern. Reconstruction, radical, thorough and complete, is to begin."

Democratic support of President Johnson in Oregon was brief and fleeting. For the expediency of the hour, the Democrats championed him in the spring campaign of 1866 as a flank movement against the Unionists. But their support was never hearty and sincere and the June election was hardly over before this became evident. On July 18, Deady wrote to Nesmith, "The Democratic papers here are beginning to show their teeth at Johnson and Seward and I am quite sure that they will do the same towards you when it comes to the pinch." The Oregon Herald, now edited by Beriah Brown, formerly editor of the San Francisco Democratic Press,[2] was made the official organ of the Johnson Administration in the State and thus remained a staunch Johnson advocate. The other Democratic papers refused to follow its lead and made the Herald a target for their splenetic shafts. The Oregonian, in commenting upon the efforts of the Herald to commit Oregon Democrats to Johnson, thus aptly characterized the Oregon Democracy: "This Johnsonized organ has made a grand mistake. Oregon Democracy is not the sort of material the official appointee supposed. It is radical. It is earnest. Its ideas are precisely those which animated the late Confederacy. It will adopt no half way measures. It cannot be warped from this policy to that, as in other states. It never had any sympathy with the Philadelphia Convention or regard for Johnson. It will not tolerate anything but the most extreme doctrine. In supposing the party might be made somewhat more conservative, Johnson's organ has made a grievous mistake."[1]

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[1] Oregonian, Jan. 5, 1867.

[2] In which Brown had unsparingly criticised President Lincoln, which act led to the gutting of the establishment on April 15, 1865.

The term of Senator Nesmith was about to expire and it was for the legislature of 1866 to choose his successor. Serving in such a momentous period, embracing the whole of the Civil War, he had rendered conspicuous service to the Union.[2] As Congressman McBride had written home,[3] Nesmith, deserting his Democratic confreres, had supported nearly every Administration measure for the prosecution of the war. He exercised a large influence in the framing of some very important measures and some of them passed through the aid of the one Democratic vote. During his six years in the Senate no Oregonian had gone to Washington without feeling a sort of proud consciousness that his senator was a man among men and that it was something worth while to be known as one of "Old Nes' constituents."[4] Under these circumstances he might apparently, have expected re-election at the hands of a legislature which was safely Union. But there was hardly even a possibility of such. On the issues which had arisen out of the war, he had disagreed with the Republican element of the

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[1] Oregonian, Jan. 12.

[2] Nesmith was a member of the Committee on Military Affairs.

[3] Argus, March 13, 1863.

[4] Deady, Oct. 27, 1866, to Bulletin.

Union party. In the policy of reconstruction he was now valiantly holding to a conservative or middle position. This did not suit Oregon politicians who "would that he were either hot or cold." He was in the position of the Statesman—leading a cause which had few followers. Individuals might dream of third parties, founded upon the policy of the President, the utterances of the Philadelphia Convention or "any other narrow isthmus between these two great oceans of popular sentiment and passion."[1] But it was all a dream—and especially in Oregon. Differing with him as to the policy to be pursued toward the South,[2] Judge Deady, quondam pro-slavery Democrat, had in July written his friend Nesmith frankly of the situation: "I believe that you have more friends in the Union party than the other, but the Union party of this state, particularly the brains and conscience of it, is thoroughly on the side of Congress and against Andy. And I do not think any personal considerations (and all these are in your favor) will induce them to support anyone for the Senate that does not agree with them on this issue and all questions included in it."

In a word, Nesmith was crushed between the upper and nether millstone. The Republicans considered him a Democrat, which was not unnatural, considering that he had been elected as such, had supported McClellan and was now the supporter of Johnson, and opposed the Republican policy anent the freedmen. On the other hand, the rock-bound, unreconstructed Democrats hated him with a cordial hatred. They disliked him politically for the support of the war and they cherished against him a personal grudge for his alliance with the Republicans in 1860, which sent him to the Senate and resulted largely in the overthrow of the Oregon Democracy. The situation in which Nesmith found himself was more than suggestive of the general situation in Oregon. Political differentiation had been effected along new lines—political realignment was rapidly being effected.[1]

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[1] Deady, Oct. 27, 1866, to Bulletin.

[2] "Although I think you are altogether estray in your present political predilections, yet you are as likely to come around right as others who might start in so."—Deady to Nesmith, Aug. 14, 1866.

The senatorial election of 1866 was the first of a long series of political intrigues and imbroglios which have been associated with the history of the Republican party in Oregon and which have made the state noted for its senatorial vendettas and deadlocks. And it is at least significant that in this first factional fight, appeared the man round whom the fierce political warfare of the state was long to rage—John H. Mitchell. Governor Gibbs was the Union caucus nominee for senator, with 21 votes, Mitchell following with 15. Had all who entered the caucus abided by its decision, Gibbs would have been elected with one vote to spare. But three members bolted the caucus nominee, and the highest vote which Gibbs received during the contest was 33.[2] The first ballot stood: Gibbs, 33; J. S. Smith, Democrat, 21; Nesmith, 9; scattering, 6. The votes given Nesmith were from Democratic members. From the first to the eighth ballot there was little change, except that Nesmith's support went to Smith. H. W. Corbett received one vote on every ballot until the eighth, when he received 5. The ninth ballot: Gibbs 20, Smith 30, Corbett 9, Jesse Applegate 4, W. C. Johnson 5. From then on to the fourteenth ballot Corbett increased slowly, Gibbs again attaining his maximum strength on that ballot. The Democrats changed from Smith to J. K. Kelly and on the fifteenth ballot transferred their support to Ex-Governor Whiteaker. W. C. Johnson then withdrew the name of Gibbs in the interest of party harmony and nominated Corbett. The sixteenth and final ballot read: Corbett 38, Smith 14, Prim 7, Kelly 5, Nesmith 4, Whiteaker 1. Some of the Union members, in switching from Gibbs to Corbett, took occasion to denounce bitterly the bolters who had thwarted the expressed will of the party organization. They asserted that they had been assured that if Corbett were not elected, Nesmith would be, which fear they declared made it easy for them to support Corbett. Antagonism was evident between the Union members and Nesmith.

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[1] Deady, Oct. 27, to Bulletin.

Nesmith, Washington, D. C., Nov. 13, to Deady: "I knew from the first that I had no *party* in the state and that there was no show. Some Republicans commended my course in support of the war. . . but denounced me freely because I was not in favor of its prosecution after the rebels had ceased to resist. Besides, I was not up to their standard with respect to the superiority of the negro over the white man. On the other hand a portion of the Democracy could not forgive me for having supported the war and because I did not support the rebellion."

[2] Oregonian, Sept. 29 and Oct. 6.

In commenting on the result, the Oregonian, October 6, said: "The second great triumph of the present session of the legislature has been achieved by the Union party. The ratification of the Constitutional amendment was the first victory;[1] and this is now fitly followed by the election of a United States senator who is in the strictest sense identified with the Union party of Oregon and of the Nation." Deady characterized Corbett as "a Radical in thought and a Conservative in action, a man of strong convictions, but temperate and moderate in speech and conduct."[2] From the permanent organization of the Oregon Republican party in 1859 until 1862, the new senator had been chairman of the state central committee. Though the old Republican leaders were generally averse to giving up their own party organization for an alliance with the Union Democrats in 1862, the determination of the question devolving largely upon Corbett, he yielded to the entreaties of the Douglas leaders and signed the joint call for the Eugene convention which led to the formation of the Union party.

While the break between Johnson and Congress drew the political lines in such a way as practically to separate Republicans and conservative Democrats, both clung to the name "Union," each denying to the other the right to use it. Not until the spring of 1867 did the Oregonian use the name "Republican" in designating its political party. May 25, it declared it to be the imperative duty of the "Union-Republican" party to keep its organization compact and perfect, in preparation for the great campaign a year hence. June 22, in an editorial "The Republican Party," it explained and defended the use of the new name or rather, the resumption of the old one.

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[1] The Fourteenth Amendment passed the Legislature by the following vote: Senate, 13 to 9; House, 25 to 22. See Statesman, Sept. 24.

[2] Deady, Oct. 3, to Bulletin.

The trend of political affairs at Washington during 1867, naturally tended still further to make for political solidarity in Oregon. Feeling became more intense as the political warfare at Washington became more and more pronounced. It bespoke a heated campaign in the state in the approaching election of 1868. The real sentiment and animus of the people are often more truly portrayed in resolutions adopted in county conventions than in state, where the platform makers proceed with more conservatism and caution. For example, the Polk County Democrats declared in March, 1868, that they would oppose with force if necessary, "any attempt of the abolitionists to impose a President upon the people of the United States, elected by the negro vote of the ten states now under military despotism." The reconstruction act was denounced as revolutionary and treasonable and its immediate repeal demanded.[1] On the other side some of the Republican county conventions spoke aggressively against Johnson, "the treacherous apostate,"[2] and endorsed the impeachment proceedings. The Clatsop Republicans declared that the abominable secession heresy of states rights, as expounded by the leaders in the secession Democratic party, was too absurd to be entertained by any unprejudiced man of sense or patriotism.[3]

The Democratic State Convention met March 19 at Portland. The committee on resolutions—Col. J. E. Ross, R. B. Cochran, Benj. Hayden, Beriah Brown and J. H. Slater, appointed in the morning, were to report at the afternoon session.[4] The convention re-assembled at 3 o'clock but the committee was not ready to report. Brown, editor of the Herald, "Johnson's organ," said there seemed to be an irreconcilable difference in the committee and suggested that it be instructed to bring in two reports. At 7 in the evening, Hayden presented a majority and Brown a minority report. O. Humason of Wasco moved that both reports be referred to a new committee, without reading. The motion carried by the close vote of 71 to 68, the new committee comprising Humason, J. C. Hawthorne, J. F. Miller, John Whiteaker, Chas. Hughes. Their report, presented the next day, was accepted. The struggle in the first committee suggests the expiring efforts of Johnson's friends in Oregon for Democratic vindication of the President.

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[1] Daily Herald, March 21, 1868.

[2] Wapato Union Club resolution, March 18.

[3] Daily Oregonian, March 20.

[4] Proceedings, Daily Oregonian, March 20, 21.

The platform was even longer than that of 1866, covering a range from a declaration in favor of liberal Congressional aid for a judicious system of railroad improvement in Oregon to a resolution of sympathy for the Irish in their struggle for civil liberty. It opposed the "sharing with servile races the priceless political heritage achieved alone by white men." The reconstruction acts and the usurpation by Congress of judicial and executive functions were denounced with a gusto which left nothing to be desired. There were the usual resolutions declaring for the sacredness of the Constitution, limited powers of the federal government and the sovereignty of the states over their internal affairs. The platform called for the equalization of the burdens of taxation, the payment of the public debt in like currency as contracted and the taxation of United States securities.

S. F. Chadwick, John Burnett and J. H. Slater were nominated as Presidential electors. As delegates to the National Democratic Convention, N. M. Bell, W. W. Page, O. Joynt, Beriah Brown and P. P. Prim, were chosen. Hayden presented a resolution instructing them to vote for G. H. Pendleton as the Democratic candidate for President. Brown opposed it vigorously, asserting that he never had and never would serve under instructions. This was but an echo of the struggle in the committee on resolutions. Hayden suggested to Brown that he could easily resign, which the latter promptly did. J. C. Avery was elected delegate in his place and the Pendleton resolution was adopted. The apparent inconsistency between the Pendleton instructions and that plank of their platform declaring that good faith and justice demanded that the public debt be paid in like currency as contracted, did not seem to disturb the equanimity of the assembled Democrats. J. S. Smith was unanimously nominated for Congressman.

The Republican view of the convention was expressed in the following declaration made by the Marion County Union-Republicans: "We recognize in the names presented by the Copperhead Convention at Portland a very decided predominance of the rebel element and the exclusion of every so-called 'War Democrat' from a place on their ticket, which reminds us forcibly of the fact that we are again fighting the same old adversary in another campaign and demonstrates the political axiom that a Democrat can no more change his politics than the Ethiopian can his skin or the leopard his spots."[1]

The Union-Republican platform, adopted at Salem, March 24, endorsed the work of Congress as unreservedly as the Democrats had condemned it;[2] spoke for the preservation, at the ballot box, of the fruits of the war; favored the admission of the representatives of Southern states in Congress "at the earliest practicable moment when the public safety will permit;" condemned every scheme for the repudiation of the whole or any part of the national debt and denounced the proposition to pay in legal tender notes those debts contracted to be paid in specie, as only a milder term of repudiation; encouraged foreign immigration and met the Democratic "Irish" plank by expressing sympathy for all people struggling for civil and religious liberty; acknowledged debt of permanent recognition to American sailors and soldiers for saving the country; bespoke liberal federal appropriations to aid in the construction of railroads.

David Logan was nominated for Congressman, receiving 56 votes as against 51 for P. E. Sullivan of Polk County. Orange Jacobs, A. B. Meacham and Dr. Wilson Bowlby were named for Presidential electors and Josiah Failing, J. L. Parrish, Maxwell Ramsby, M. Baker, C. C. Beekman and H. R. Kincaid, as delegates to the National Convention. The convention was unfortunate in the selection of its congressional nominee. While a man of marked ability, Logan's habits made him a vulnerable candidate. There was great dissatisfaction over his nomination and his defeat was freely predicted at once by members of his own party.[1] The temperance and church people deserted him, especially the Methodist Republicans, Smith, the Democratic nominee, being a Methodist.

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[1] Daily Oregonian, March 24.

[2] Proceedings, Daily Oregonian, March 27.

The campaign of 1868 was marked by that vehemence of party feeling which had always rendered Oregon politics intense and strenuous. The Oregonian made a target of the first plank of the Democratic platform, which expressed renewed allegiance to the time-honored principles of the Democratic party. It insisted that these principles were embodied in the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, with their offspring of nullification, secession and rebellion. On the subject of reconstruction, the Democrats demanded the admission of the Southern representatives in Congress at once and now maintained Lincoln's position that the seceding states had never been out of the Union. The question of repudiation, or the payment of United States bonds in gold or paper figured prominently. But more noisily discussed than all was the question of negro suffrage and equality. The Democrats accused the Republicans of standing for universal negro suffrage. This the latter denied, maintaining that the colored men had been enfranchised in the Southern states as a measure of necessity in reconstruction, but that those states, when again in the Union, would each have power to regulate the suffrage for itself. But the Democrats returned continually to the attack with such convincing arguments as, "Do you want your daughter to marry a nigger?" "Would you allow a nigger to force himself into a seat at church between you and your wife?" and "D——n a nigger!" On two points they kept up an incessant clamor—they lost no opportunity to denounce "niggers" and "taxes."[1]

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[1] In a letter to Nesmith, March 27, Deady said Jesse Applegate was instrumental in securing the nomination of Logan, controlling nearly all the southern county votes and capturing J. G. Wilson by making him chairman of the convention. "Billy Adams, Medorem Crawford and Huntington are furious and all swear they will not support Dave. Billy says openly that he will vote for Smith. I think that all the federal officers are opposed to Dave, while he is defiant and swears that if he is elected their heads shall tumble."

The June election resulted in a decisive victory for the Democratic ticket and the first defeat which the Union party had suffered since its organization. Smith was elected congressman over Logan by a majority of 1209 and the Democrats secured 43 of the 69 seats in the legislature, each house of which had a Democratic majority. The Oregonian took the defeat philosophically[2] and after the first shock sought to explain how it happened. It stated that ever since the California election of the preceding fall when an 18,000 Union majority in that state had been turned into a 9,000 Democratic one, it had been very difficult for the Union party to maintain its ground in Oregon. The Dalles Mountaineer, Democratic, attributed Logan's defeat to the finance question and the heavy taxes that the people were now compelled to pay. It even went so far as to assert its belief that if a vote were to be taken in Oregon upon the question of paying the national debt, the latter would be repudiated.[3] But the Union-Republican press maintained that their defeat was not attributable to defection in the ranks of their party, but that it was entirely owing to accessions to the Democratic party within the past two years from the disbanded Confederate armies—to the "influx of a rebel, guerilla population" which had been emigrating westward to escape the consequences of reconstruction.[4] The election figures at least partially supported the Union-Republicans in this contention. The latter had barely held their strength shown by the election of 1866. The vote for Logan, admittedly not a strong candidate, was 300 above that given Governor Woods two years previous. But the Democratic vote had increased by 1800 in the same period, and, what was more to the point, practically one-third of this increase was registered in the three northeastern counties alone—Union, Grant and Baker—which were steadily being populated by the Southern emigrants. And it is not to be supposed that these three counties received all this emigration.

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[1] Daily Oregonian, June 5.

[2] "All that we have to say at this time is soon said. We are beaten. We (the Union party) are too big to cry and we are too badly hurt to laugh."—Daily Oregonian, June 2.

[3] Quoted in Daily Oregonian, June 8.

[4] Oregon Sentinel, June 13.
Daily Oregonian, June 12.

Five months later the Democrats carried the state for Seymour against Grant, for President. But in the November election the Democratic majority, 165,[1] was so small that the influence of "Price's Army" as a determining factor in the political readjustment in Oregon was more than ever pronounced. In an editorial on the result, "Oregon a Lonely Mourner for the Lost Cause," the Oregonian announced: "Price's rebels have once more come to the relief of the Copperhead cause. The reinforcement was opportune." The suggestive, though highly colored characterization of the much heralded "army" followed:[2] "It appears that Price's boys in Eastern Oregon can be relied on to give any required majority for the restoration of the 'Lost Cause.' The nomadic rebel Democracy of the country lying between the waters of the Missouri and upper Columbia, combining the characteristics of the wild Indian and the unreconstructed rebel, can change about from one place to another to suit the exigencies of elections, voting now in Oregon, again in Idaho, Montana or Washington and back again in Oregon when the next occasion requires. . . . They constitute the Democratic flying brigade, operating on the frontier. It is anything but agreeable to have a majority of the actual voters of the state beaten by this wandering rebel horde who live nowhere and help to bear none of the burdens of government."

Whatever the influences to which the returning Democratic majorities of 1868 were attributable, the fact remained, the ante-bellum political status in Oregon had for the time been re-established. Upon the new issues which had arisen, two distinct parties had aligned themselves. Upon these and ever new occurring issues the future political battles of the state were to be fought. Whatever its potency might continue to be elsewhere, the rallying cry of "Save the Union!" would no longer win political victories in Oregon.

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[1] Daily Oregonian, Dec. 4.

[2] Daily Oregonian, Nov. 10.

Having first reviewed the situation in Oregon in the ante-Territorial period, as a basis of political development, the writer has attempted to give a faithful portrayal of the rise of political parties in Oregon; of the manner of their organization and of the influences by which party organization was maintained. It has been the intention to present a view of the political life and activity of this early period. The history of the slavery question in Oregon has been followed in an endeavor to show how extensive and how all-inclusive was the influence of the great National issue. It effected the organization of a new party and the overthrow of the Democratic regime and the disintegration of the Oregon Democracy. The general breaking down of old party lines on the opening of the war and the alignment of the people into the two classes of Union and Disunion, has been shown. And lastly, the process of political adjustment and realignment, growing out of the issues raised by the war, has been followed, leading up through the elections of 1868 which resulted in returning victory for the Democrats.

Having traced the political history of the state to this point of post-bellum readjustment, the purpose of the writer has been fulfilled. The Democratic party maintained in the main its advantage for a few years, after which honors were for a time pretty evenly divided between the two parties. The Republican party gradually assumed the ascendancy again, but the fierce factional struggles which have taken place within its ranks, have many times deprived it of the victories which its numerical superiority would imply. The story of these later political struggles is interesting—partaking often of the dramatic and sensational. However, they were not shaped and dominated by the force of great National and vital issues to the extent that were the earlier political activities, to the period of which the writer has confined his efforts.

APPENDIX I

The Vote on the Adoption of the Oregon Constitution, November 9, 1857.

(From the official returns published in the Oregon Statesman, December 22.)

	Constitution		Slavery		Free Negroes	
Counties	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Benton	440	215	283	368	132	459
Clackamas	530	216	98	655	113	594
Clatsop	62	37	25	71	25	65
Columbia	30	66	11	84	24	66
Coos	68	26	19	72	10	79
Curry	117	14	35	95	8	121
Douglas	419	203	248	377	23	560
Jackson	465	372	405	426	46	710
Josephine	445	139	155	435	41	534
Lane	591	362	356	602	97	783
Linn	1111	176	198	1092	113	1095
Marion	1024	252	214	1055	76	1115
Multnomah	496	255	96	653	112	587
Polk	528	188	231	484	53	584
Tillamook	23	1	6	22	1	25
Umpqua	155	84	32	201	24	181
Wasco	55	89	58	85	18	122
Washington	265	226	68	428	80	393
Yamhill	371	274	107	522	85	521
Total	7195	3215	2645	7727	1081	8640
Maj'ties	3980			5082		7559

APPENDIX II

The Vote in the Presidential Election of 1860.

(Official returns in the Statesman, Dec. 3.)

County	Douglas	Lincoln	Breckenridge	Bell
Benton	140	202	381	3
Clackamas	173	409	324	3
Clatsop	38	68	29	..
Columbia	38	46	30	..
Coos	88	71	22	3
Curry	69	42	53	6
Douglas	288	321	502	23
Jackson	406	394	675	88
Josephine	221	261	371	32
Lane	166	492	555	8
Linn	312	580	671	5
Marion	864	598	286	17
Multnomah	364	570	261	5
Polk	390	180	215	4
Tillamook	8	11	13	..
Umpqua	72	151	75	3
Wasco	147	168	255	2
Washington	134	360	140	3
Yamhill	213	420	216	7
Totals	4131	5344	5074	212
Plurality		270		

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